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The Socio-Economic Nature of the USSR

by Antonio Carlo

I.

The Theoretical Debate on the Nature of the USSR.

1. Introduction

The problem of the social character of the USSR and of its economic structures was the subject of intense debate during the 1930s. Today, it is becoming all the more actual within the context of the Sino-Soviet split and the power politics of the USSR. Thus, it is necessary to proceed to an historical analysis of the present and past roots of Soviet degeneration, keeping in mind that, on this problem, there has been a great theoretical lacuna. Even the Chinese position, which grasps precisely the class nature and non-socialist character of the USSR is occasionally rather schematic and reticent—especially on the Stalinist phase.[2] It often oscillates between asserting that capitalism *is being* restored in Russia and that capitalism *has already been* restored—something quite different.[3] Moreover, although at times it is taken for granted that the Stalinist economy was socialist, occasionally it is claimed that the degeneration of the USSR only became evident after the death of Stalin (which presupposes that the degeneration existed earlier, even if only in a manner not altogether evident).[4]

According to Marx's, Engels' and Lenin's writings on the Commune and on the dictatorship of the proletariat, the socialist state is characterized by the dictatorship of the many over the few. This refers to the following characteristics: (a) control, that is, the participation from below and the right to recall representatives at any time (as opposed to principles of appointment, of cooptation, of irremovability, and of hierarchical

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1. Originally published in *Giovane Critica* 26 (Spring, 1971), pp. 2-75. English translation is by Wayne Heimbach.

2. On this point see the Chinese thesis expressed in "La Questione di Stalin" in *Quaderni delle edizioni Oriente* 5 (1963); the oscillating character of the Chinese position was recently discussed by Collotti-Pischel ("La Posizione Cinese," in *Problemi del Socialismo*, 35-36 [1968], pp. 1268ff).

3. On this point, see "La Base Sociale del Revisionismo," in *Lavoro Politico* 2 (1967), pp. 8ff, and "Il Revisionismo in Urss," *Lavoro Politico* 8-9 (1968), pp. 16ff. The first of these, done by French Marxists-Leninists, seems to speak of a process of restoration just initiated in the USSR; the second, done by Italian Maoists, seems to allude to a process already substantially ended.

4. Lin-Piao's discussion at the meeting of the red guards of November 3, 1966 expressed how the origin of the capitalist restoration in the USSR must be located in the absence of an experience similar to the Cultural Revolution, i.e., in the absence of the building of a vast workers' democracy. The accusation attacks all of Soviet history and even Lenin, but, most of all, it attacks Stalin, who during more than 25 years of exercising power, "forgot" to build an efficient workers' democracy (admitting that such forgetfulness can be imputed to a single individual); thus it seems clear that the roots of the degeneration are to be discovered much earlier than Khrushchev's era. On all of this, see "La Dialettica della Rivoluzione," in *Classe e Stato* 3, p. 13, note 4.

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responsibility towards superiors typical of bourgeois democracy);[5] (b) the executive and not merely legislative functioning of assemblies (in order to prevent their being reduced to merely decorative "chatter sessions"); (c) economic egalitarianism (even if only relative) and the fight against privileges; (d) the suppression and substitution of a regular army, understood as a bureaucratic apparatus contraposed to the collectivity, by an armed populace so as to realize, even at the level of military repression, the overcoming of the separation between civil society and the state, thus facilitating a diffusion of power below.

This theory is by no means abstract, but encapsulates, on the basis of the experience of the Commune, the characteristics a state must have in order to express the interests of the great majority of the people guided by the proletariat.[6] If we examine the Soviet state, the discrepancy between these criteria and reality becomes obvious.

First of all, consider economic planning, a most fundamental element for a state that calls itself socialist. In the Soviet Union, command and appointment from above is an undisputed principle that allows no real element of participation from below. Various post-Stalin reforms have not changed the situation. For example, the law of July 15, 1958 gave limited powers to workers and their organizations (production assemblies, union committees) to deal with such minor matters as food services, health services, etc. Granting such rights, which were more or less consultative in character, left the hierarchical structure of the factory and of the economy untouched.[7]

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5. For further clarification on the characteristics of bourgeois democracies, see Colletti, "Stato di Diritto e Sovranità Popolare," *Società* 6 (1960), pp. 905ff.

6. A work by Korsch was recently published ("La Comune Rivoluzionaria," in *Giovane Critica* 20, pp. 77ff) in which the theses of Lenin and Marx are accused of formalism, because they tend to stress certain formal juridical characteristics of the state while de-emphasizing its social substance.

We are surprised that such a critique should be made by an author of Korsch's stature. The use of "formal" characteristics by Lenin and Marx corresponds to the social substance of a state that is no longer the instrument of an elite against the masses, but which is gradually being absorbed by civil society; from this comes the subordination (without any privilege) of the functionaries to the citizens, the substitution of the army by armed people, etc.

The writings of Lenin have recently been subjected to a series of acute criticisms (see Milliband, "The State and Revolution" *Monthly Review* 21:11 [1970], pp. 77ff). These criticisms have revealed a few limits and gaps (particularly with respect to the problem of the mediation of power in the dictatorship of the proletariat). However, even Milliband admits that the anti-bureaucratic project that motivated Lenin remains valid (p. 80) and it is exactly such a project that inspired the major points mentioned in the text.

7. On the functioning of the Soviet economy (before the 1965 reforms), see especially Nove, *The Soviet Economy* (London, 1961). On the lack of real democracy in the factories see Mouskely, *URSS*, vol. II (Milan, 1965), pp. 1235ff and Boffa (an Italian communist) who writes (*Dopo Kruscev* [Turin, 1965], p. 235): "One cannot talk about intervention [by the workers—A. Carlo] in the management of enterprises, and the unions remain purely bureaucratic entities, public offices rather than associations, without any political initiative." At most, workers are "consulted."

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Let us take a closer, highly schematic look at how a plan is launched. It is elaborated at the upper levels of the party and government without any actual proletarian participation (even after the "liberal" reforms of 1965). The plan is then approved by the party congress and ratified by the Supreme Soviet which also allocates the necessary financial laws to put the plan into effect.[8]

At this point, it could be argued that the interventions of the Supreme Soviet and of the party congress are the "democratic" moments in the elaboration of the plan. Such reasoning, however, is useless since the Supreme Soviet is an empty and discredited organism. It performs no executive functions; convenes briefly (for two to ten days), two or three times a year; votes unanimously most of the time, rarely proposes modifications or amendments, and discussion is almost wholly lacking. All of this is admitted even by those Italian communist officials considered experts on Russian affairs.

A similar degeneration is evident in the party where a very restricted elite monopolizes the most important decisions (such as de-Stalinization, the fall of Khrushchev, the invasion of Czechoslovakia), while excluding any real participation from below.[10] As for unions, the degeneration process has

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On the juridical-formal method of approving the plan, see Scott, *Russian Political Institutions* (London, 1961). On the lack of democracy in planning, particularly in the agricultural sector, see Gaddi, *Mezzo Secolo di Agricoltura* (Milan, 1969), pp. 71ff, 102ff, 219ff; Schwartz, *Russia's Soviet Economy* (New York, 1954). The party and the government are by now largely fused (the ministers are usually high-ranking members of the party) and therefore one can speak of a state-party summit.

8. Scott notes how the plan is approved while it is already being executed (often in an advanced stage); in substance, the "sovereign" agencies merely ratify accomplished facts.

9. On this, see Mouskeley, vol. II, *op.cit.*, pp. 1232ff as well as the testimony of Boffa (*op.cit.*, p. 234) who writes: "Its [the Supreme Soviet's] sessions are always very brief, the work limited to a few points, the discussions are generic, the questioning non-existent, while legislative activities, i.e., its main function, are reduced to a minimum, although serious and old gaps remain in Soviet legislation. The election of the government constitutionally falls within the prerogatives of the Supreme Soviet. Yet, it was not deemed essential to convene it when Kosygin took over Khrushchev's position as president of the Congress."

On the same pages one reads that elections are "plebiscite demonstrations extraneous to political discussion...which always end up with the votes going to the only candidates nominated."

In 1959 a law was passed in homage to the Paris Commune that rendered all elected officials subject to recall. This, however, did not change the situation. When Marx, Engels and Lenin spoke of the revokability of the elected as an expression of a substantially new principle, they assumed that the assemblies would function in a manner and in a context totally different from that of the Supreme Soviet, where assemblies have become completely powerless.

This does not mean that revokability is in itself a merely formal judicial principle as Korsch maintains. It becomes such only when it is placed in a context that differs from that outlined by Lenin in *State and Revolution*. In the Russian context where neither egalitarianism, nor the armed populace, nor real "social" planning, nor freedom of expression and political choice (for the proletariat) exists, the 1959 law is merely a propagandistic caprice.

10. On this point, see the testimony of Boffa who writes: "...the highest organ of the party was diluted into a number of shapeless assemblies which, on a par with the Supreme Soviet, unanimously approved the decisions made by the leadership of the party" (*op.cit.*, p. 234).

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been occurring there for quite some time.[11] In addition, an "armed populace" has never existed. Instead, there is a Red Army that closely resembles a traditional army in its hierarchical organization and separation from civil society.[12] The resemblance is so close, in fact, that apologists would be hard pressed to point out significant differences between the Soviet and Western armies (aside from the fact that the Red army defends the "socialist homeland").

Another fundamental point of Marxist thought is egalitarianism and the problem of overcoming the barrier between intellectual and manual labor. While the Chinese have made serious attempts to confront this problem, the Russians have generally ignored it (propagandistic proclamations notwithstanding). In a recent series of Italian conferences, Liberman has had to admit that there was a salary spread of about 1 to 10 which the 1965 reforms tended to broaden.[13] Yet, the Soviet income spread is actually much broader. Under the Russian fiscal system, incomes can range from 100 to 7,000 or more rubles a month,[14] and Soviet ministers earn a nominal stipend which is a hundred times greater than the wage of a manual worker (this in addition to routine privileges).[15] There is no doubt that in Marx's thought egalitarianism is to be understood in a relative sense (at least, in the transitional phase). Given the fact that egalitarianism is more difficult to realize in a relatively underdeveloped country, one can easily justify the 1 to 5 income spread for China noted by Bettelheim.[16] In Russia, however, the

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11. In addition to Boffa's testimony, see also Deutscher, *Trade Unions: Their Place in Soviet Labour* (London, 1950). This work by the Polish historian was first published in 1949, but since then nothing has changed concerning the nature of these organization. This is pointed out by Lisa Foa in the introduction to the Italian edition of Deutscher's work (*I Sindacati Sovietici* [Bari, 1968], pp. 16ff).

12. On this, see Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed* (New York, 1965), pp. 204ff. Trotsky himself admits, however, that from the beginning the Red Army had a "permanent" and essentially traditional character. Stalin only helped to accentuate this traditional character and his successors conserved it. Even for what regards foreign policy, the USSR remained completely outside the kind of schemes that should guide a socialist state (even if at times it uses as a threat the revolutionary movements that it helps in a limited and instrumental manner); on this point see Schneiderer, *La Teoria Sovietica della Coesistenza Pacifica* (Bari, 1969).

13. On this see also Colletti, "Il Metodo Liberman," in *La Sinistra* 1 (1967), pp. 18ff; on the spread of workers' salaries, see Mandel, *Marxist Economic Theory* vol. II (New York, 1970), pp. 593ff. On the spread of wages and income see Broderson, *The Soviet Worker* (New York, 1966), pp. 172-175.

14. See Dumont, *I Problemi Agrari del Comunismo* (Milan, 1966), pp. 305ff; in a Russian kolkhoz the salary spread among only manual laborers is about 1 to 11. (Dumont, *op.cit.*, p. 102). This book was translated in Russia as an example of constructive criticism. Dumont notes, among other things, that the spread among agricultural laborers is greater in Russia than in France (a capitalist country!).

15. See D'Angelo and Palladino, *La Sfida di Kruscev* (Turin, 1965), pp. 87 and 65ff; Blumer, *La Rivoluzione Culturale Cinese* (Milan, 1969), p. 82. However, Soviet leaders often admit the need for bettering the minimum wage considered to be too low. Nevertheless, Kosygin had to admit that the minimum wage would stabilize in 1964 around 40-50 rubles as opposed to the 50-60 that had been foreseen. (See Levi, *Il Potere in Russia* [Bologna, 1967], p. 498.)

16. Bettelheim and others, *Il Socialismo in Cina* (Rome, 1966), pp. 40ff; Blumer, *op.cit.*,

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spread is enormously broader even though the USSR is the world's second industrial power in total production: it is clear, therefore, that the "relative" egalitarianism of the Soviet Union is identical to that of a society torn by insoluble social antagonisms.[17]

2. Trotsky's Theses

As early as the mid-1930s, Trotsky had shown the degeneration of the constituent cells of the Soviet state with an unsurpassed superstructural analysis.[18] Yet, the Russian revolutionary did not extend his negative judgment to Soviet economic structures: the anti-socialist degeneration was seen as having occurred solely at the political level. According to him, what happened was very similar to the phenomenon analyzed by Marx in the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. Given the weakness of Russian social classes, the state was able to gain a relative autonomy in relation to the existing classes (none of which was able to administer power by itself). Eventually, the bureaucracy seized power and took a large cut of national income. Still according to Trotsky, property relations remained socialist in character in the same way that productive relations in Louis Bonaparte's France were capitalist while the bourgeoisie was under the 'tutelage' of the bureaucratic state machinery. In Russia, for Trotsky, it was the working class that was under the 'tutelage' of the bureaucracy.

To support his analysis, Trotsky pointed to the fact that individual members of the bureaucracy could not alienate or transfer state property in their own individual interests and that legal formal definitions of property had not changed since it was socialized after the revolution. The second argument is not decisive since, very often, formal legal definitions do not reflect actual relations, but mystify them for propagandistic and ideological aims in order to defend a class-rule by legitimizing it. The first argument, on the other hand, is based on the presupposition that the characteristics of

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mentions a spread of 1 to 6. On this, see especially Sweezy, Huberman, "Understanding the Cultural Revolution," *Monthly Review* 19:7 (1967).

17. In reality there is a connection between distribution and production; and the increasing presence of the already grave inequalities in the distribution of income is an indication on the phenomenological level of an antagonistic society. On the organic connection between production, distribution and consumption, see Marx, *Grundrisse* (Middlesex, 1973), pp. 88ff.

18. See Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed, op.cit.*; his *Scritti 1929-1936* (Turin, 1962); his *Stalin* (New York, 1946); Mandel, *op.cit.*; Naville, *Le Nouveau Leviathan*, vol. I (Paris, 1967); Deutscher, *The Prophet Outcast* (New York, 1965); Deutscher, *La Rivoluzione Incompiuta* (Milan, 1965); and Marie, *Staline* (Paris, 1967), p. 168; Illuminati, *Sociologia e Classi Sociali* (Turin, 1967), pp. 100ff. The difference between base and superstructure, recently contested by Colletti, has been defended by Timpanaro ("Engels, Materialismo e 'Libero Arbitrio'," in *Quaderni Piacentini* 39, pp. 110ff). We agree with Timpanaro. The claim that accepting the dichotomy would exclude the social character of production is not convincing. Society should be seen as a totality composed of various levels (economic, political, ideological, etc.) each of which has a socio-historical character.

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bourgeois property in one of its historical phases are those of every type of property.[19]

Actually, ownership of the means of production (understood as the power to dispose of them for one's interest outside of any veto and control)[20] in Russia belongs to the bureaucracy considered collectively as a class. Thus, it is not strange that the individual bureaucrat cannot individually dispose of it. Group ownership where individuals do not have the power to dispose of common goods has existed for thousands of years (e.g., the communal property of ancient Germanic communities). In our case, the group owning "goods" (i.e., the whole Russian economic apparatus) is a social class that runs the economy according to specific relations of production.

The most devastating critique of Trotsky's analysis is Rizzi's.[21] According to Rizzi, it is the bureaucracy that makes plans, directs production, determines prices, distributes the national income and coordinates the means of production. Thus, it must be considered as the class owning the means of production. To talk about socialist or workers' property and structures, logically implying ownership by workers as a whole, is simply absurd when this collective is totally excluded from fundamental (even micro-economic) decisions. It is useless to object that the bureaucracy cannot appropriate all of the surplus production created by the workers. Actually, this "inability" (which does not prevent the bureaucracy from treating itself very well) does not result from collective worker ownership. Rather, it is explained by the requirement for broadened reproduction posed by the need to conquer backwardness and by the antagonisms with capitalist countries which force the Soviet Union to reinvest the greater part of the surplus. The same is true for Europe and the U.S. where the consumption of luxuries by the capitalists, although significant, absorbs only a minor part of the surplus. Most of it is reinvested to feed broadened capitalist reproduction.

To object that the bureaucracy consumes less than the capitalists (although it takes care of itself much better than the rest of the Russian population) makes little sense for a Marxist who must emphasize the

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19. On the other hand, this problem cannot be reduced to the formal legal character of property. Marx noted (see *Capital* III [Moscow, 1971], pp. 791-792), that similar economic structures often differ on the basis of their particular historical conditions. In this case, what must be uncovered are the basic laws that govern the productive relations (structure) in the USSR. Whether certain juridical formal characteristics can differ in different social formations is a secondary problem.

20. One could object that the concept of property used in the text is somewhat indeterminate, and this would go against Marx's warning to be "precise" especially with the concept of property (see *The Poverty of Philosophy* [New York, 1963], pp. 154ff). However, such an objection would not be all that valid, because certain specific characteristics of bureaucratic ownership have already been mentioned in the text (e.g., its belonging to a class considered collectively and not to its individual members).

21. *Il Collettivismo Burocratico* (Imola, 1967), pp. 47ff, in particular pp. 66 and 71; also see Kuron and Modzelewsky, *Il Marxismo Polacco all'Opposizione* (Rome, 1968), pp. 47ff. These two authors also follow the "school" of bureaucratic collectivism.

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function that a social group performs in the production process. Having established that it is the bureaucratic apparatus which dominates production by running it in its own interests and by appropriating the social surplus, we will have to speak of the bureaucracy as a class. It cannot be maintained that the bureaucrats have managerial powers, but they cannot dispose of the productive apparatus. In the West such a power is comparable to that of managers who do not own the companies that they run, rather, for and in the interests of stockholders. In the latter case, however, the owner can always recall or substitute the managers (and this actually happens). In Russia, the only way the proletariat has of recalling the bureaucracy is through a revolution. Short of this, the Russian workers cannot in any way prevent the bureaucrats from making basic choices in their own interests (except for marginal concessions that, in specific situations, every dominant class grants to its exploited people). In this light, it remains a mystery how the Russian bureaucracy can be said to hold only management power, but not power to dispose of property in its own interests. Similarly unexplainable remains the limited political (and not social) character of an anti-bureaucratic revolution by the working class. Further evidence of Trotsky's contradiction can be seen in the following passage: "It is useless to say that the distribution of the productive forces in the various sectors of the economy and, in general, the whole content of the plan will be drastically changed when the plan will be determined by the interests not of the bureaucracy but of the producers themselves. But to the extent that the question of overthrowing the parasitic oligarchy remains still tied to the preservation of nationalized property, we must characterize the future revolution as *political*" (Trotsky's italics).[22]

Trotsky does not deny that there is a need to modify 'drastically' the general content of the plan since it is determined by the interests of the bureaucracy. Such a phenomenon, however, is social in character insofar as it implies that the running of the economy is determined by bureaucratic interests. In the case of the manager of a large capitalist enterprise of which he owns no stocks, the interests of the strongest stockholders determine the running of the company. A workers' democracy at the factory and planning level has more than only political relevance. It constitutes a most essential element of socialist productive relations.[23] Without it, socialist ownership is deprived of organs through which the will and interest of the proletariat can be expressed in the running of the productive apparatus and degenerates into an empty formal juridical definition lacking historical or practical importance.

Trotsky's error was to assume that nationalized property was synonymous

22. See *In Defense of Marxism* (New York, 1970), p. 4.

23. In this sense see Vallier, "L'Économie Cubaine: Quelques Problemes Essentiels de son Fonctionnement," in *Les Temps Modernes* 262, pp. 1590 to 1622.

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with worker and socialist ownership. He failed to realize that if the plan is dominated by the will and the interests of the bureaucracy while the workers are alienated from the productive apparatus and the basic decisions, the identification between nationalized property and socialist ownership is only a formal legal fiction masking the basic impossibility of the working class to make decisions in its own interests. Trotsky actually accepts the theses of his critics, while formally conserving his own definition of a socialist state which has nothing to do with the phenomenon that he himself described in the quoted passage.[24] That the bureaucracy and the system created by it is not destined to last for very long does not change anything. When a group of people appropriates in its own particular interest the surplus labor of others in a certain way and according to particular economic laws, we have classes and an antagonistic productive system. The duration of the system is not particularly relevant. (The Asiatic mode of production lasted for thousands of years almost without change while capitalism met very violent social and economic convulsions after about a century of life.)

Even more recent reformulations of Trotsky's theses by Huberman and Sweezy are no longer acceptable. They speak not of class, but rather of a stratum or caste which has not had time to "solidify itself" as a class.[25] For Marx, class is determined by the relation of a group of people to the instruments of production and by the role that they consequently play in productive relations. Marx distinguishes between a "class in itself" and a "class for itself." A class "for itself" obtains when: (a) there is a group of

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24. Moreover, this is not the only passage in which Trotsky seems to fall into serious contradictions. In *The Revolution Betrayed, op.cit.*, p. 249, we read: "It [the bureaucracy] is in the full sense of the word the sole privileged and commanding stratum in the Soviet society." There is another particularity which is not any less important. The Soviet bureaucracy has expropriated the proletariat politically in order to defend by methods *of its own* the social conquests of the proletariat. But the very fact of its appropriation of political power in a country where the principal means of production are in the hands of the state, creates a new and hitherto unknown relation between the bureaucracy and the riches of the nation. The means of production belong to the state. But the state, so to speak, "belongs" to the bureaucracy.

If, then, the state "belongs" in some way to the bureaucracy, and if the means of production belong to the state, then it is logical to conclude that the bureaucracy is both the dominant class and the "ownership" class. Trotsky more or less admits this when he says that the bureaucracy is in the "broader sense of the word" the sole commanding stratum (for a Marxist the "broader sense of the word" implies the presence of a class), and when he notes that new relations exist between the bureaucracy and the riches of the nation. Of course, the bureaucracy cannot be formally considered the "owner," but such a formalistic argument is ridiculous from the mouth of a thinker of Trotsky's calibre.

25. See "Lessons of the Soviet Experience," in *Monthly Review* 19:6 (1967), pp. 11ff. On many occasions non-Trotskyist writers have made similar claims. See for example: Duverger, *Political Parties, Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State* (London, 1969); Kosík, *La Nostra Crisi Attuale* (Rome, 1968), pp. 88; Bottomore, *Elites and Society* (Middlesex, 1966), pp. 41 and 84-85. The work of the Yugoslav communist Kardely also develops a neo-Trotskyist analysis, although his conclusions tend to be rather apologetic. He views the bureaucracy as a caste necessary for the development of "socialism" but destined to gradually extinguish itself. Cf. his *Burocrazia e Classe Operaia* (Rome, 1969), pp. 97ff.

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subjects having common interests derived from the function they perform in the productive process (class in itself); (b) these subjects are conscious of their function; and (c) they organize to defend their own interests.[26] The Soviet bureaucracy fulfills these criteria. It has an interest in defending its type of ownership. It has done everything to consolidate its position. Finally, it has at its disposal the political, military and economic organization of the state and party. The Soviet bureaucracy has indeed transformed into a class for itself very rapidly (even more rapidly than did the bourgeoisie). This, however, does not rule out that the bureaucracy has formed itself as a class.

3. Towards a Definition of Capitalism

Before examining the theses according to which the Soviet degeneration is structural in character, it is necessary to establish what exactly is meant by capitalism, since many people claim that the USSR has developed (or returned to) a particular form of capitalism. In this respect, it is not sufficient to point out that there is inequality, injustice and exploitation in Russia. This kind of thing exists in all antagonistic societies. We should recall Engels' admonishment not to place in the same bundle the laws regulating the productive relations in radically different places. By so doing, we run the risk of producing only banal tautalogies.[27]

26. The Marxist concept of class has been subjected to a host of different interpretations. By and large, the "economistic" current which emphasizes the connection between the productive structure and the class has prevailed. For this perspective see Bukharin, *Historical Materialism; A System of Sociology* (Ann Arbor, 1969), pp. 276ff. Other Marxist currents, however, stress the role of conscious organizational elements. Of course, they do not conceive of such elements as existing in a vacuum, but as rooted in the productive structure. On this see Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness* (London, 1968), pp. 46ff; Goldmann, *The Human Sciences and Philosophy* (London, 1969), pp. 102ff; Ossowsky, *Class Structure in the Social Consciousness* (London, 1963), pp. 72ff.

Lenin seems to have moved in the direction of Bukharin: see "A Great Beginning," in *Collected Works,* vol. 29 (Moscow, 1965), p. 421. The "consciousness" positions that put the emphasis on the superstructure (particularly with respect to political behavior) have recently been attacked by Poulantzas in *Political Power and Social Classes* (London, 1973). The latter has in turn been correctly criticized by Glucksmann in "A propos de la Theorie Marxiste de l'Etat Capitaliste. Vers une Conception Nouvelle de la Politique," in *L'Homme et la Société* 11, pp. 199-202. In Marx we find instances of both the "objectivist" conception (see *Capital,* vol. III, *op.cit.,* pp. 886) and the "subjectivist" conception (see *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* [Moscow, 1954], pp. 102ff). These two positions, however, are not in themselves antithetical, since they corespond to the Marxist distinction between class-in-itself (existing at the structural level, but still not conscious and organized) and class-for-itself (conscious and organized). No matter which Marxist concept we stress, it is clear that the bureaucracy presents the distinguishing features of a class-for-itself (which includes and presupposes the existence of a class-in-itself).

The fact that the bureaucracy wields political power, as well as economic power, does not mean that it is not a class (for the opposite point of view, see Illuminati, *op.cit.,* pp. 17ff, and Bottomore, *op.cit.,* pp. 84-85). A class that has its roots in the economic structure remains tied to these roots, even when elements of a superstructural character are added (Federico Stame has written on this in his review of Illuminati's book in *Quaderni Piacentini* 31, p. 292).

27. Cf. Engels, *Anti-Dühring* (Moscow, 1962), p. 203. On the fact that the determination of the laws of movement and their irreducible specificity is a characteristic element of a historical-social formation, see the writings of the school of Della Volpe and in particular see Colletti, *Marxism and Hegel* (London, 1973).

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The typical fundamental law of capitalist production is production for surplus value. Marx writes: "The product of capitalist production is not a simple *product* (use value) nor a simple *commodity,* that is, a product provided with an exchange-value; its specific product is *surplus value*: commodities that possess more exchange value (i.e., they represent more value than that advanced for their production in the form of commodities and money). In this, the *working process* appears only as a *means,* while the *process of value-creation* or the *production of surplus value* appears as the end. As soon as the economist remembers this, capital is proclaimed wealth used in production to generate 'profit' " (Marx's italics).[28]

From this and many similar passages, it follows that: (a) the fundamental law of capitalism is production for surplus value (profit); (b) surplus value assumes the specific form of a surplus of commodities (or in commodities) exceeding the capital advanced; (c) consequently, surplus value is a category tightly tied to the market. Surplus value-commodity-market are the three fundamental pivots of capitalism. Only where they are dominant can a country be called capitalist.

For Marx, the market operates through the anarchic-competitive interaction of several capitals propelled by the aim of profit. The process of production for surplus value (implying the predominance of expanded rather than simple reproduction) begins with a market that operates in an unplanned, blind and spontaneous manner. Marx expresses this as follows: "By definition, competition is the internal nature of capital. Its essential

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28. Marx, *Il Capitale: Libro I, capitolo VI, Inedito* (Florence, 1969), pp. 32-33. Marx's position is recapitulated in a number of places and on it he bases all of his analysis in *Capital.* On this point see also Engels, *Anti-Dühring, op.cit.,* pp. 281-282. It should be pointed out, however, that Marx (*Grundrisse, op.cit.,* pp. 359ff) seems to distinguish between absolute surplus and relative surplus value. He maintains that only the latter is typical and exclusive of capitalism while the former can also be found in pre-capitalist societies. See also Semprun, "La Rivoluzione Scientifica e Tecnologica: un Mito Revisionista," in *Il Manifesto* 2 (1970), p. 56. In this passage, however, it seems that Marx underemphasized the specific character that the category of surplus value has for capitalism. Such a category presumes the existence of a process of creation of capital through which capital is reproduced by the creation of something more (surplus-value) which takes on the form of commodities. In precapitalist societies, instead, the commodity category is not dominant. During certain historical periods, such societies may experience an expansion of mercantile activities, but as Kula has noted in his *Teoria del Modo di Produzione Feudale* (Turin, 1970), p. 24, this occurs in a manner quite different from capitalism. This is particularly true for feudalism, because there the market is not organically tied to the process of capital creation (realization of surplus-value). Moreover, in the passage quoted in the text (written 7-8 years after the *Grundrisse*), Marx talks about a surplus-value, a specifically exclusive element of capitalism (without any discussion between relative and absolute surplus vale). This is confirmed in *Capital* (*op.cit.* III, p. 876) when, after admitting that it is possible to reconcile (but only up to a certain point) the forms of income in different societies, Marx states "...if we strip both wages and surplus-value, both necessary and surplus labor, of their specifically capitalist character, then certainly there remain not these forms, but merely their rudiments, which are common to all social modes of production."

The warning against making hasty generalizations against the fundamental principle of historical specificity is, therefore, very clear: surplus-value is a form of income specific to capitalism.

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characteristic is to appear as the reciprocal action of all capital; it is an internal tendency appearing as imposed from outside. Capital does not and cannot exist except divided into innumerable capitals; for this it is conditioned by the action and reaction of one upon the others."[29] Volume III of *Capital* lends further support to this statement. There, Marx analyzed the laws of capital movement. Concerning the law of the equalization of the rate of profit, Marx claimed that without such a law, capital is inconceivable.[30] This law, in turn, presupposed, in Marx's scheme, the anarchic-competitive interaction of several autonomous capitals.

Clearly, capitalism implies the exploitation of human labor-power. But does this exploitation always have to take the form of a wage relation? Marx seems to say so in many places.[31] Yet, a more careful examination of his works shows that Marx considered this a normal requirement of capitalism precisely in those countries in which the system had assumed its purest form. There were situations, however, in which production for profit used anomalous forms of exploitation (slavery)—situations which are nevertheless capitalist according to Marx.[32] Clearly, Marx saw that the presence of the aim of profit rendered the economic laws of capital relatively dominant even in anomalous forms.

Thus far, Marx's definition of capitalism can be summarized as follows: "Capitalism is that particular antagonistic mode of production based on expanded reproduction in search of surplus value (profit) that operates through anarchic market competition of several autonomous productive units (capitals)." Yet this definition is derived from works dealing with nineteenth century capitalism when oligopolies were rare. Now, when ologopolies are more the rule rather than the exception,[33] it is justified to question the relevance of this definition.

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29. See Marx, *Grundrisse, op.cit.*, p. 414. Moreover, there are other writings where Marx openly states that in *Capital* he described the interconnection of several autonomous capitals (see, for example, Marx-Engels, *Carteggio*, vol. V [Rome, 1951], pp. 181, 184). Furthermore, when Marx refers to "total social capital" (see, for example, *Capital*, vol. II, *op.cit.*, p. 108), he always alludes to the sum of several autonomous capitals that act on the basis of similar laws of movement.

30. See Marx, *Capital*, vol. III, *op.cit.*, pp. 173ff.

31. See Marx, *Capital*, vol. I, *op.cit.*, p. 715; vol. II, pp. 36ff.

32. See Marx, *Capital*, vol. I, p. 236 where he alludes to the use of American black slaves for the production of surplus-value. On page 759 he says that the patriarchal slavery was transformed under the influence of the world market into a system of commercial exploitation (synonymous with capitalism in this context). This is even clearer in the Marx of the third volume of *Capital* (p. 238) where he alludes to those "capitalist" entrepreneurs that used slaves in the colonies in order to obtain the maximum profit. Similarly, Lenin, in *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* (Moscow, 1964), refers to capitalist enterprises that used feudal wage relations for the production of surplus-value. Mariategui has noted the existence of similar phenomena in the enterprises on the Peruvian coast. Cf. his "The Problem of the Indian and the Problem of the Land," in Mariategui, *Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality* (Austin, 1971).

33. See Galbraith, *American Capitalism* (Boston, 1956), pp. 41ff; Sylos Labini, *Oligopoly and Technical Progress* (Cambridge, 1962), p. 13.

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Obviously, capitalism has changed. Thus, individual property has become secondary in relation to corporate ownership (stock companies, trusts). Marx would say that with the emergence of the great corporations, the capitalist system suppresses private ownership within itself.[34] By this, Marx meant only that individual (private) ownership would be substituted by corporate ownership. He certainly did not imply that the mechanism of business competition would become less important—an assertion that would be indefensible now and even more so in Marx's time. Competition as the mechanism persisted, though in varying forms. The perfect competition that had determined prices in the nineteenth century gave way to imperfect competition in which cartels to a large extent determine prices. At any rate, even if imperfect competition is no longer based on prices, it is no less anarchic than the competition of the nineteenth century. In fact, it is more ferocious since now it obtains between giants[35] which have tremendous economic and political means at their disposal for influencing the market. Consider, for example, the enormous expenses poured into advertising (to rob someone else's consumers); the swindling and intrigues in the stock exchange; the international intrigues; the financial support of coups and wars which serve to appropriate land capable of being exploited, from a competitor, and so on. Within such a context, it does not seem appropriate to talk about "organized" capitalism on the basis of some ambiguous hints in the old Engels.[36]

State intervention in the economy cannot eliminate the competition which is internal to the nature of capital. Competition derives from the fact that each productive unit (small businesses or large oligopolies) acts for its own profit, to the disadvantage of other competitors and against the general interests of the community.[37] To eliminate this feature, it would be

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34. Marx, *Capital*, vol. III, *op.cit.*, p. 436 and p. 439. In particular, on page 439 Marx establishes an identity between private property and individual property, when he says that joint-stock companies no longer risk their own property but that of society. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that such property functions within a mercantilist-capitalist system, i.e., a system characterized by production for surplus-value as realized through the market. The joint stock company introduces a new element into capitalism. It permits the large capitalist to incorporate the property of others into his enterprise and to manage this property in any way he sees fit. However, this new element is always contained within the framework traced by Marx in *Capital*. For a similar perspective see Milliband, *The State in Capitalist Society* (London, 1969), p. 30.

35. Thus, cf. Magdoff, *The Age of Imperialism* (New York, 1969); Pannekoek, *Organizzazione Rivoluzionaria e Consigli Operai* (Milan, 1970), p. 78; Samir Amin, *Accumulation on a World Scale* (New York, 1974). On "imperfect" competition see also Galbraith, *op.cit.*, pp. 50ff. However, it should be made clear that price competition does not disappear in the oligopolistic system. Periodically, it reappears with new characteristics, as in the case of Adesite referred to by Galeano (see "The Denationalization of Brazilian Industry," *Monthly Review* 21:7, p. 18).

36. See in particular Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, *op.cit.*, p. 381.

37. In this sense see Lange, *Political Economy*, vol. I (New York, 1963), p. 176; Mandel, *Marxist Economic Theory*, vol. II, *op.cit.*, p. 563. The position of Engels on organized capitalism appears to be isolated, even within the Marxist classics. Marx noted that the monopolies

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necessary to eliminate the entire system—something the capitalist state is not prepared to do. The only thing that it can do is to create a legal-political form which prevents the system from blowing sky-high. A typical example is the ten-hour law in England. With respect to the first half of the nineteenth century, state intervention has certainly increased (even on the economic level). But the overall effect can only be to subdue the anarchic character of the system—not the anarchic character of competition.

Given the transformation in the type of competition and the type of capitalist ownership, we should expect a similar transformation in the set of capitalist laws applicable to this new form of capitalism. Capitalist laws derived from the phase of perfect competition, such as the tendency of the rate of profit to fall and the law of price-value correspondence appear out-dated.[38] (Such laws and others depending on the dominance of a market mechanism do not therefore operate in the Soviet system.) For example, when a commodity's price greatly exceeds its exchange value, a double exploitation obtains. Not only is the worker more exploited in comparison to productivity (the tendency of wages to fall behind increases in the level of productivity is well noted), not only does he produce surplus value in the productive process, but he is also forced to buy commodities at a price greater than their value. Cartel prices do in fact have their own logic: they allow the capitalist to increase his profits further than would be possible under perfect competition. To the exploitation in the productive process can be added the fraud of unequal exchange in the circulation phase. Sliding wage scales, trade union wage struggles and other similar devices ease, but do not eliminate, unequal exchange. The goods produced by the workers always remain commodities organically destined for exchange on the market, without which production bogs down and a crisis ensues. Production for the market, therefore, remains the guiding element of the system and, with it, the search for profit through exploitation of workers in the productive process. This direct exploitation is compounded by the indirect exploitation in the form of inflated oligopolistic prices and declining real wages.

The law of the average equalization of the rate of profit (which before was an expression of the law of value), today operates on new bases—if we follow Hilferding's persuasive thesis.[39] Yet, the earlier definition of capitalism is

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do not eliminate the anarchy of capital, but reproduce it on a different level (see *The Poverty of Philosophy, op.cit.*, p. 216). The more mature Lenin wrote that the system born of competition does not eliminate the anarchy of capital; on the contrary, it produces "a series of sharp and sudden contradictions."

38. There has been an attempt to formulate the law of the rate of profits to fall in different terms: see Gilman, *The Falling Rate of Profit* (London, 1957). As for the law of value, Marx himself admits that it is applicable only in the absence of monopolies (see *Capital*, vol. II, *op.cit.*, p. 177).

39. Hilferding, *Il Capitalismo Finanziario* (Milan, 1961), pp. 230 and 300ff. The Austrian Marxist noted that in an oligopolistic system, capital cannot circulate freely from a sector with

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elastic enough to include modern capitalism's distinguishing features as well as its elements of continuity with classical capitalism. As such, we can now compare the Soviet system with this definition of capitalism sufficiently "orthodox" and specific, yet inclusive of neo-capitalism, in order to see whether or not the Soviet system falls under it.

4. Wittfogel's and Hilferding's Theses

Wittfogel has argued that the Soviet system is nothing but a re-run of the old Asiatic mode of production which he calls oriental despotism or a hydraulic and agro-managerial society.[40] His theories have been bombarded by generally valid criticisms which need not be reiterated here.[41] What needs to be stressed is the inappropriateness of comparing an advanced industrial society, like the Soviet one, whose organic character is broadened reproduction, and societies based on "natural production" where simple reproduction or production for consumption is predominant—although there are sporadic and occasionally brief spans of expanded reproduction (for example, with particular and fortunate climatic conditions).[42] While the fundamental problems of the Soviet system which determine the dynamic laws and contradictions stem from the unbalanced relation between the primary and secondary industrial sectors, from the impossibility of planning to provide everything for a certain level of industry, etc., such themes are extraneous to a society of the "natural type." They obtain only in a dynamic and industrial society characterized by certain particular laws of development working through the mediation of a plan. This type of society is transitory and crisis-bound. It could be said that it is the most "transitory" of human societies. In contrast, history has shown oriental despotism to be anything but transitory.

Even the interventions of the mandarin's bureaucracy in the economy are not directly comparable with those of the Soviet state. The nature of the intervention differs in terms of dimensions and limits. In the oriental system,

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a low rate of profit to one with a higher rate. This is due to the enormous difficulties involved in gaining entry into a monopoly sector. The backward sector, however, must "do something" to prevent its elimination. The two following possibilities exist: (a) cartel prices that permit the more backward sector to raise its prices; (b) combination (i.e., joining in a more advanced sector).

40. See Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism* (New Haven, 1957), to which can be added his "Risultati e Problemi nello Studio del Dispotismo Orientale," in *L'Est* 1 (1967), pp. 7ff.

41. See Sofri, *Il Modo di Produzione Asiatico* (Turin, 1969), pp. 92ff and 134ff; and Chesneaux, *L'Asia nella Storia di Domani* (Bari, 1967), pp. 145ff, which, however, "ideologically" exalts the Soviet Union.

42. On this point, see Sofri, *op.cit*, pp. 56-57, where he clearly demonstrates that Marx admitted the possibility of expanded reproduction in pre-capitalist societies, although as a sporadic and exceptional phenomenon. Marx noted that the pre-capitalist modes of production (and in particular the Asiatic mode of production with which Wittfogel is preoccupied) are characterized by a low level of development of the productive forces and that production is mainly for personal satisfaction of the participants' needs. (Accumulation and expanded reproduction have here a generally secondary and sporadic character.)

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the state developed important public works (for example, dams and canals, hence, the name, hydraulic state) that aimed at defending and guaranteeing agricultural production primarily based on local consumption. Surplus destined for the market was rather modest.[43] The countryside was dominated by a vast group of rich landowners who had a significant function in the relations of production.[44] In the Soviet system, rather, the fundamental problem is the development of industrial production on a broadened scale through forced accumulation based on restricting consumption and agriculture. Soviet state intervention, then, is much more massive, and its goals are quite different.

Hilferding's analysis is quite different. Although it is only a bare outline, it points out some basic elements of the Soviet economy and in particular the clear predominance of the plan over the market. Thus, to talk about a monopoly state capitalism is clearly absurd given the almost total absence of mercantile elements. Even prices and wages, in this context, assume a quite different importance.[45] Hilferding's analysis, of course, needs further elaboration. Generally speaking, he ignores the contradictions that threaten the Soviet economy and he unwarrentedly equates the Russian economy with that of fascist Italy and Nazi Germany.[46] Hilferding, furthermore, argues that the Soviet bureaucracy (subjected to the ferocious purges resulting in the Moscow trials of 1936-38) is not the owner of the means of production. The bureaucracy, he argues, had no real autonomous power: it was only a tool in Stalin's hands.

Actually, there are no historical instances of power invested solely in an individual. No one can dominate an immense society by himself. "Personal power" means only a very high level of centralization with one person at the apex. This person, however, does not make decisions as an isolated individual but only as the exponent of certain forces of which he is the highest hierarchical expression. The events following Stalin's death make our point clear. After his death, this so-called "personal power" was invested in a group of colleagues from the central political bureaucracy. Although they loosened the high level of discipline that Soviet society had found to be intolerable, the fundamental Soviet economic structure has remained unaltered (at least up to 1965)—with the possible exception of some reforms

43. On this, see Barrington Moore Jr., *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Boston, 1966), pp. 169ff.

44. Wittfogel himself does not deny the existence of these rich farmers ("Risultati e Problemi," *op.cit.*, p. 17). He writes: "But even when the agro-despotic state carries out its directive functions to the maximum, it does not act within the economy, remaining, therefore, semi-directive." Our evaluation does not change even when we take into account that the Asiatic state often developed a limited amount of industrial activity (cast-iron production) as has been revealed by the studies of Balacz. Such a very limited type of industrial activity did not have the dimensions and could not have the problems that faced the Soviet industrial plan.

45. See Hilferding, "State Capitalism or Totalitarian State Economy?" in C. Wright Mills, *The Marxists* (New York, 1962), p. 382.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 337 and chapter II, part 3.

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which, however, have left the whole essentially unchanged. They did however, recognize the principle of collective direction by people who were the expression of the party and the central political bureaucracy. This indicates a substantial continuity between the two epochs—the only difference being a jacobin discipline and a hierarchical centralization with no room for opposition, necessary during the heroic stage of building the system. These elements, however, are not the expression of the arbitrary power of an isolated tyrant but that of the necessity imposed by building a system that has survived Stalin and his alleged "personal power."

5. Marcuse's, Burnham's and Djilas' Theses

Herbert Marcuse confronts the problem of the nature of the USSR in *Soviet Marxism*. He has no doubts that Russia has undergone structural degeneration. Unfortunately, he does not go into the fundamental character of this structure, and his analysis is left suspended at a superstructural level. While he makes some interesting comments (e.g., concerning the ossification of Marxist theory), he does not deal with the structural problems that are at issue here.[47] Djilas' *The New Class* is at a less sophisticated level. Basically, there's nothing really new in it. Most of his correct observations had already been elaborated by Rizzi in his polemic with Trotsky.[48]

Much of Burnham can also be traced back to Rizzi, although his distinction between the bureaucracy and the technocrats as two strata of one class is original. The technocrats, according to Burnham, constitute the ruling wing of this class.[49] Actually, the situation is somewhat different. In 1928-29 in Russia, the economic power was centralized in the hands of the central political bureaucracy represented by Stalin. Those technocrats who opposed its decisions were eliminated by administrative methods.[50] Stalin's death gave these technocrats the opportunity to advance a series of demands aimed at restoring capitalism at the expense of the bureaucracy's power. This suggests that the technocrats saw themselves as a force external and opposed to the bureaucracy.

The Chinese have contributed the most in bringing the debate on the nature of the USSR down from the domain of "political experts" to that of

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47. Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism* (New York, 1958), pp. 261ff.

48. See in particular his *The New Class* (New York, 1957), pp. 37ff.

49. *The Managerial Revolution* (Bloomington, 1966), p. 221. Burnham also maintains that even in the West the technicians are at the point of dispossessing the capitalist and taking over power (a tendency supposedly expressed by the rise of the corporate manager). Contrary to Burnham, however, our analysis shows how the Soviet system cannot automatically develop in the West. Moreover, Burnham's thesis has been buried under an avalanche of criticism which need not be recapitulated here. "Managerialism" has been resurrected by Galbraith in his *The New Industrial State* (Boston, 1971). Aside from the term "technostructure," this book does not add anything new. Nor does it really refute the criticisms levelled against managerialism.

50. See Brobrowsky, *La Formazione del Sistema di Pianificazione Sovietica*)Milan, 1960), pp. 91ff; and Cafagna, *L'Economia dell'Unione Sovietica* (Milan, 1960), pp. 34 and 37.

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world politics. Nevertheless, their position is problematic. Their characterization of the present period in the USSR as capitalism and of the Stalinist period as socialism is unconvincing. Moreover, they often advance contradictory positions in other matters, and fail to develop their analyses to their logical conclusions. Thus, Lin Piao identified the beginnings of Soviet degeneration in the Stalinist phase when no attempt was made to introduce a series of democratic proletarian organs. Without such organs, revolutionary conquests become problematic, even at the economic level. This seems to imply that, if workers' democracy was absent, it is necessary to analyze its causes while denying the socialist character of the Stalinist era. Socialism without a workers' democracy as described in *State and Revolution* is unimaginable. Western Maoist accounts are even worse: not only do they ignore the positive elements of Lin Piao's account, but they deteriorate to a dull and trivial exaltation of the Stalinist era. They completely overlook that tendencies such as the struggle against egalitarianism, bureaucratization of unions, alienation of the workers from planning, material incentives, etc., are not very new developments—as Lin Piao himself admits.

It becomes altogether inexplicable for Western Maoists how and why people like Liberman and Nemencinev appear armed with profit rates and "material interests." If during the Stalinist era there really had been a dictatorship of the proletariat (in spite of certain "negligible" deviations), if the proletariat really educated itself to power for several decades, it is necessary to explain how and why these "evil men" have gained power without running into violent proletarian reactions.[51]

6. State Capitalism?

According to Bordiga, Russia is an example of a particular form of monopoly state capitalism.[52] His argument is weak for, as Trotsky rightly noted, the Leninist concept of state capitalism presumes the existence of a bourgeoisie in whose name the state organizes capitalist production (within the limits imposed by an anarchistic-competitive system).[53] When these

51. Such a position emerges from the writings of Italian Maoists who, at best, refer to imprecise "errors" without placing them dialectically within their historical context. Moreover, Western Maoists perceive the process of capitalist restoration as proceeding in a linear and peaceful manner. See Huberman and Sweezy, *La Controrivoluzione Globale* (Turin, 1968), p. 302. The process instead proceeds in a dialectical manner through the class struggle between the bureaucrats and technocrats. Despite the Czech affair, Maoists do not see a conflict between different groups of revisionists.

52. The theory of state capitalism is very popular. See for example Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion* (New York, 1963); Balacz, *La Bureaucratie Celeste* (Paris, 1968), p. 312; Mallet, "Bureaucratie et Technocratie dans les Pays Socialistes," in *L'Homme et la Société* 10, pp. 147ff. For the latest discussion on those authors who speak of state capitalism see Naville, *Le Salaire Socialiste*, vol. II (Paris, 1970), pp. 281ff. In this current, a fundamental work is that of Chaulieu, "Les Rapports de Production en Russie," in *Socialisme ou Barbarie* 2 (1949).

53. See Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed, op.cit.*, p. 245. He is followed on this point by various people such as Mandel, Illuminati, Naville, Deutscher, etc.

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conditions do not obtain, i.e., when the state destroys the bourgeoisie and centralizes the productive apparatus in its own hands, there is a complete subversion of the market and capitalism, as defined earlier, can no longer be said to exist. No one would deny that the categories of commodity, market and profit are crucial for capitalism. Let us examine whether or not these capitalist criteria apply to the Soviet economy.

Kuron and Modzelewsky claim that: "As opposed to capitalism, the bureaucracy does not need to realize its surplus or that part of the total product that corresponds to the depreciation of constant capital on the market. It is the owner of all the businesses and of all of production and, therefore, does not have to buy from itself. If the passage of steel from the mill to the factory or of coal from the mine to the mill is registered as an acquisition of means of production, it is in reality a simple form of product transfer within the framework of the same ownership and is not a true and proper deed of sale." According to this line of reasoning, the categories of commodity-market and surplus value (profit) do not exist or are secondary to the Soviet economy. The workers produce surplus product but not surplus value, since the latter, in Marx, is organically tied to the market.

It has been objected that such reasoning is formalistic and hasty since in the primary sector (production of capital goods) money appears as a mercantile category implying the presence of exchange.[55] This counter argument, however, assumes that money necessarily performs the same function that it performs in capitalism. After all, money also existed in many pre-capitalist systems. Money here does not play the role of a mediator of exchange (selling)—something difficult to imagine when there is only one owner. As has been shown by others, money here is a mere bookkeeping instrument and a measure of value which has the function of regulating the distribution of the wealth projected by the plan.[56] The fundamental function of money here is different from that played in a market economy.

It would be useless to object that these arguments deal only with the superstructural level, since all monetary circulation obtains at that level. The

54. Kuron and Modzelewski, *op.cit.*, p. 48.

55. Cf. Bettelheim, *Planification et Croissance Acelerée* (Paris, 1967), pp. 17ff; "Impresa e Proprietà Statale nella Società di Transizione," in *Il Manifesto* 1 (1970), pp. 63ff; *Calcul Economique et Formes de Proprieté* (Paris, 1970); Martinet, *La Conquista dei Poteri* (Florence, 1969), pp. 52ff. Stalin had earlier denied the commodity character of goods, from the state sector, with arguments partly similar to those of Kuron and Modzelewski (i.e., that it was not a transfer of property) in his *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR* (New York, 1952), pp. 18-22. Stalin's thesis was largely accepted by Guevara in his polemic with Bettelheim. See Guevara, *Oeuvres Choisies*, vol. II (Paris, 1968), pp. 146ff.

56. See Minc, *Economia Politica del Socialismo* (Milan, 1967), p. 252; Mandel, *Marxist Economic Theory*, vol. II, *op.cit.*, pp. 568-569. Nevertheless, Minc appears to attribute other functions to money. As such, his theory approaches that of Bettelheim. On this last point we cannot agree; for us money in the primary sector cannot but have a bookkeeping function as a measure of value. This lack of a "real payment" has led some (Lavigne, *Le Capital dans l'Economie Sovietique* [Paris, 1961], p. 71) to argue that the managers of the Soviet economy behave as if their equipment was free and that this is the source of the dysfunctions and waste.

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reason the bureaucracy uses bookkeeping money in relations between state enterprises is clear and simple. First of all, calculating units of labor-time presents, as even Bettelheim admits, a series of presently unsolved practical difficulties.[57] A socialist society would confront and solve similar difficulties. But it turns out that calculations in terms of labor-time would render social relations clear and transparent. It doesn't take much to understand that in a conflict-ridden society, where one class lives off the surplus labor of another, the dominant class has every reason to mystify exploitative relationships behind a socialist façade: the interest of the bureaucracy lies in presenting itself as the vanguard of socialism.

Consider the kolkhoz. Without a doubt, they are state enterprises masked as cooperatives. According to Stalin, there should be mercantile relations between the kolkhoz and the state, and clearly they have increased since 1958.[58] But the exchanges are only apparently mercantile, hiding the real bureaucratic appropriation that would contradict any natural mercantile mechanism. Prices are often nominal and in many cases do not even cover the cost of production. The "payment" by the state, therefore, serves only to permit the kolkhoz to reintegrate only part of their provision in order to perpetuate their activity.

The problem of the industrial sector producing consumer goods (which has always had a secondary importance *vis-à-vis* the capital goods sector) is more complicated. In this domain, the exchange relation between the state that sells and the consumer-citizen who buys also has a nature profoundly different from mercantile and capitalist forms of exchanges. Speaking about socialist products destined for consumption, Minc writes: "...it is claimed that this product has a double character: in it are present the characteristics of the special product directly connected to the aim of socialist production, its planned character, and the characteristics of the commodity. The product of modern socialist economy is no longer only a commodity as in the case of the product of an economy of simple mercantile production, or a capital product. Those who produce commodity products only want to find a buyer on the market and bring in the highest possible proceeds in the case of simple mercantile production, or the highest possible profit, in the case of capitalist production. In a socialist economy, however, production is based on a state plan, meant to realize the social ends of socialist production, i.e., to maximize the satisfaction of the chosen social needs of the period."[59]

Aside from the ideological character of the last statement—the bureaucracy has its own, not society's interest, at heart—the passage does contain some insights. In East European regimes consumer goods do not aim at bringing the maximum price or maximum profit but furnish consumers with as much as is necessary for their needs according to the plan. Unlike in

57. See Bettelheim, *Calcul Economique, op.cit.*, pp. 30ff.
58. See Scuotto, *Rublo Credito e Banche nella Russia Sovietica* (Pozzuoli, 1967), pp. 255ff.
59. See Minc, *op.cit.*, p. 93.

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capitalism, here use-value prevails over price or profit aims. An example may clarify the point. Oleg Antonov, a Soviet manager, refers to a grotesque case that happened in Moscow a few years ago. The plan called for the production of a certain type of shoe which Russian consumers disliked. They demanded, instead, a different kind of shoe. The efforts of a consumer advocate to have the plan modified so that the new kind of shoe could be produced, failed: the old shoes continued to be made and continued to be remain unsold.[60]

The example shows that exchange is part of an economy dominated by production for use-value even in the consumer-goods sector. In fact, the plan establishes what use-values to produce within a global frame of reference in order to reconstitute the labor-power necessary to the system. Here, if the produced values do not correspond to consumers' needs, and there is a "consumers' strike" as in the (not unusual) case referred to by Antonov,[61] the consequences are not like those in a capitalist economy where the realization of surplus-value is what dominates market activity. Unsold shoes did not precipitate the crisis that is often identified with unrealized surplus value in a capitalist economy. There were no fall of profits and wages, unemployment, bankruptices, etc. Nor were artisans forced to close down or to adapt to market conditions as would have been the case under mercantilism. All of this is lacking in Russia because there is no category of surplus value and because exchange and other mercantilist mechanisms assume less importance in the Soviet than in capitalist or mercantilist systems.[62]

It is conceivable that the plan could assign the necessary use-values to the consumers by means of bureaucratic-administrative methods. But, clearly, such a solution would merely intensify the already acute social and political tensions because it would necessitate a further centralization of state authority. Thus, it is understandable why the system of exchange subordinated to the plan is preferable. Yet, some questions remain unanswered. If the main goal of this exchange is to provide use-values to consumers-producers, why does the plan not change immediately when some goods remain unsold, rather than continuing to produce goods that won't be sold? The phenomenon appears irrational—but not so from the perspective of the economy of the plan. For the planners, the consumers' needs must be subordinated to the needs of the plan. If there are consumer "boycotts," so much the worse for the consumers; boycotts hit consumers the hardest. Never in history have the exploited rejected the dominant system by starving

60. Antonov, *La Pianificazione Sovietica* (Florence, 1968), pp. 52ff.

61. These phenomena have often been pointed out by various journalists and scholars. See Mandel, *Marxist Economic Theory*, vol. II, *op.cit.*, p. 585; Ciofi, "L'Edificazione della Economia Sovietica," in *Critica Marxista* 4-5 (1967), p. 208.

62. Cf. Bettelheim, *La Pianificazione Sovietica* (Milan, 1949), pp. 72, 77. He points out in passing that the Soviet market is anomalous because it lacks competition. This point, however, is never taken up again in his subsequent work.

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themselves to death. In the long run, the Soviet consumer is forced to capitulate although there may be exceptional stubbornness on this or that pair of shoes. The rationale is that it is better to produce goods that will remain unsold for a certain period of time than to modify the plan by taking into consideration the interests of the masses who remain outside the plan itself. This is so not only because the Russian economy is authoritarian and hierarchical in character, and does not readily accept rebukes from below, but because the interests of the masses are objectively aimed towards a broadening of the consumer-goods sector. This, as we shall see, would literally explode the whole plan.

Indeed, at times, the polemics generated by more macroscopic examples of dysfunction presumably force the system to make concessions, eliminating or minimizing some of the more serious cases of waste in the consumer-goods sector. While there is not much data to support this, it is clear that marginal concessions had been made before the 1965 reforms inaugurating the "new course." The very emphasis of Soviet propaganda from Malenkov concerning the problem of consumer goods was a minor concession made to Russian consumers. It was a minor concession for, as we shall see, the Soviet plan cannot adequately develop the consumer-goods sector (thus fully taking into account consumers' needs) within the domain of planning and of traditional relations of production. There is an additional reason to assume that concessions and adjustments had been made at some time or another: a system as advanced as the Russian cannot survive without at least neutralizing the great mass of workers. In Stalin's era, with the imperialist encirclement, forced development and post-war reconstruction, sacrifices could be justified. Similar propagandist justifications for similar sacrifices lost their credibility after the beginning of the 1950s when the USSR emerged as the second world power. However, whatever adjustments were made, they came about not within market mechanisms, as in capitalism, but within the overall structure of the plan. "Adjustments" served to eliminate or attenuate the more sensational dysfunctions of the type Antonov mentions in order to meet consumer needs for political reasons.

At any rate, it should be evident by now that the Soviet economy is not characterized by the dominance of surplus value, market, and commodities. While market relations and commodities survive in a residual form in the small production within the kolkhoz, any mercantile elements found in the framework of the system (money, consumer-state exchange) survive with characteristics and functions profoundly different than those of their counterpart in a market economy. The 1965 reforms, to a certain extent, have modified this framework by going beyond minor concessions and marginal adjustments. They have modified the logic of the plan in a mercantile direction.

But, on the whole, capitalist or mercantile categories do not apply to the Soviet system. Only under conditions where goods are produced by several

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economic units independent of each other can one speak of commodity and mercantile exchange. Says Marx: "The *products* of *labor* do not become *commodities* unless they are products of independent *private labors*, i.e., carried out independently of each other" (Marx's italics). Capitalism presumes the interaction of several autonomous capitals. To speak of commodities where these conditions do not obtain, gives the same name to very different realities.

Although Russian enterprises have always had a certain degree of autonomy, this autonomy has always been rigidly subordinated to the plan. The '65 reforms have only partly modified this situation. The type and quantity of the products, prices, investments, wages, number of employees, the destination of the product, the amount of surplus product and planned orders, were all dictated by the plan. Moreover, these orders were carried out under a fixed and unchangeable contract. In this context, it is really absurd to believe that state enterprises operate autonomously in real market relations since the enterprises' autonomy and the material possession of their goods remain rigidly fixed within the plan.

Even in the West the branches of large enterprises have a certain relative autonomy since headquarters cannot sanction everything in the last detail. No one, however, would describe this relation as mercantile: branch plants are clearly subordinate. The same holds true for Soviet enterprises in relation to the plan with one significant difference. Whereas the branches of large western oligopolies are dependent on an economic unit which competes with other independent units on the market for profit, Soviet enterprises operate within the context of a plan that controls the whole economy and manages production for ends different from those of the "Western " system. Only when one confuses the concept of enterprise as a distinct, productive unit, integrated in the play (USSR) and that of an enterprise as an independent unit (West), as Bettelheim does, can one easily establish mercantile relationships.

Undoubtedly, with the 1965 reforms the distinct economic units will become increasingly more independent. Before jumping to any hasty conclusions concerning the revival of mercantilist categories, a dialectical analysis must pull together the various phases of the process, its development and genesis. Those who anticipate the dominance of mercantile categories confuse the end of the process with its beginning. If the above is correct, it follows that the commodity-market-surplus value pivot, dominant in capitalism, is absent or secondary in the USSR, or at least categories such as the commodity operate in an altogether secondary role—rather different from the way they do under capitalism. This would be true even if one were to accept Baran's and Sweezy's thesis according to which, in late capitalism, the category of "surplus value" is obsolete and should be replaced by that of "surplus" (surplus product).[63] The fact remains: surplus is always organically

63. See Baran and Sweezy, *Monopoly Capital* (New York, 1966).

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connected to an economy dominated by the market and production for exchange. The surplus in question is, therefore, apart from linguistic similarities, something quite different from the Soviet surplus product.

7. The Concept of Wage and Productive Labor in the USSR

We can approach our argument from a different angle: from the perspective of labor-power. In the capitalist system, labor assumes commodity form (we talk of the labor market). Labor's price is determined by the law of supply and demand and by the mercantile competition between capitals. In the Soviet system, the state is the monopolistic owner of the labor force.[64] (This, of course, like all economic phenomena must be understood only in the tendential sense. The fact that labor fluidity is never totally repressed, that farmers escape working on collective enterprises, reveals that state domination is prevalent but not absolute). Accordingly, the worker receives a wage fixed by the plan, independent of any substantial market law.

A rapidly expanding capitalist society reaching full employment, and a concomitant capitalist competition, would normally drive wages upward. Although Russia reached full employment by the beginning of the '30s,[65] wages remained at the level determined by the plan. Of course, concessions (sometimes overrated)[66] have been granted to the proletariat. In general, however, wages have remained depressed to permit accumulation and Stalinist industrialization. Between 1928 and 1950, industrial production grew six times. Real wages, however, stayed below the 1928 level.[67] This does not mean that labor productivity did not increase during this period: although Soviet industrial development is labor-intensive and the projections of the plan have often failed to materialize, it is clear that the first plan's objective of obtaining a 100% productivity increase was only realized at a 41% level. Whatever increases did result, however, were not reflected in the real wages of the workers. The situation did not basically change after 1950 (wage and consumption control to the advantage of accumulation), although some of the more despised aspects of Stalinism were reduced. Clearly, the wage dynamic in Russia is very different from that of a capitalist society.

Furthermore, not only do Russian workers work for only one boss (the state) under conditions of his choice, but for a long time they could not even choose which state enterprise to work in. Steps were initially taken to tie the worker to the means of production at the beginning of the '40s in response

64. Rizzi, *op.cit.*, pp. 80ff; for a similar perspective see Hilferding, *State Capitalism, op.cit.*, p. 334.

65. See Di Leo, *Operai e Sistema Sovietico* (Bari, 1970), p. 145.

66. See Di Leo, "Classe Operaia e Meccanismo Economico nei Paesi Socialisti," in *Contropiano* 3 (1968), pp. 657ff; Di Leo, *Operai...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 180ff.

67. On this point see Geshenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, 1962), and Schwartz, *op.cit.*, p. 461.

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to the massive labor mobility that became problematic in the second half of the 1930s.[68] Under conditions of full employment and a high need for industrial workers, many moved from their factories in search of better conditions and higher pay. Capitalist bosses under similar circumstances would have been forced to increase their wages in order to attract labor-power. In Russia, the problem was solved by means of an administrative state intervention which "fixed" workers to specific factories.

The measure was repealed only in 1956 when the growing complexity of Russian society rendered unenforcible old police-bureaucratic methods which tended to intensify socio-political tensions. Subsequently, less crude ways were used to control labor mobility. For example, concessions like seniority rights were introduced.[69] Nevertheless, after 1956, the worker still remained tied to working for the same boss, the state, no matter what business (agricultural or industrial) he chose. Unlike his Western counterpart, the Soviet worker could not choose freely among several capitalists competing on the market. This lack of competition and the fact that the plan fixed wages, explains the very complex wage dynamic. (It should be noted that the restoration of collective bargaining in 1947 had minimal effects, given the bureaucratic character of the unions.)[70] Wage determinations in the Soviet Union have always remained well within the limits of the system. They are certainly not comparable to their counterpart in the capitalist system (under similar historical conditions such as full employment and economic expansion).

In 1957, the average real wage of a Russian worker was about 45 dollars compared to about 55 dollars for an Italian worker. Even if invisible wages are taken into account (which gives Russia an advantage since it does not generally produce very high quality goods and services), a difference of 8% remains.[71] This gap widened from 1957 to the mid-60s when salary increases in Italy exceeded those in the USSR. Italy, however, has not realized

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68. This was the case from 1940 to 1956 (on this see Dobb, *Soviet Economic Development since 1917* [London, 1966], and Baykov, *The Development of the Soviet Economic System* [Cambridge, 1946], p. 361). The law was repealed in 1956 (see Nove, *The Soviet Economy, op.cit.*, p. 116).

69. Di Leo, *Operai...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 178 and 248.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 237. Di Leo's analysis, however, is very problematic. On page 159 she writes that Soviet labor was "labor not acquired on the market; it was not remunerated according to a contract, but simply fed." One is dumb-founded to read such things; the labor force is perceived as a commodity, but as being totally extraneous to a mercantile exchange. On page 170 and 177 she alludes again to the lack of real state-worker negotiations (and it can be seen that the 1947 reform did not substantially change things). It does not occur to Di Leo that such negotiations are absent (in real and not just in formal-legalistic terms) because there is no negotiable exchange. Negotiations, when they are not a mere formality (as with state-kolkhoz relations), are an organic expression of mercantile exchange.

71. For this data, see D'Angelo and Palladino, *op.cit.*, p. 83; Levi, *op.cit.*, p. 235. Concerning invisible wages, Levi writes (p. 243): "The truth is, however, that no invisible wage (corresponding to free education and health care which, moreover, also exist to a large extent in the western countries in a similar manner or at minor cost to the inhabitants) is enough to

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full employment and has a per capita GNP inferior to the Soviet one.[72] The difference between the two countries is rather clear: although the Soviet Union has had decades of full employment, its wage dynamics have remained contained. The 1962 minimum wage law that established the minimum wage at 40-50 rubles (40-50 dollars, according to a dubious rubles-dollars exchange rate) by no means resulted in a significant improvement of Soviet wages.[73]

Then there is the case of Czechoslovakia. Using 100 as the base for the level of per capita consumption and investment in the USSR in 1963, Czechoslovakia consumed more (138) but invested less (91) than the USSR.[74] Yet, Czechoslovakia also has economic planning and a low level of consumption in comparison to western countries. In more or less the same period, the Czechoslovak standard of living was two and a half times lower than that of France, while her per capita industrial production was 1.75 times greater. Similarly, Czech wages were below those of capitalist countries with modest industrial development.[75]

In conclusion, one could say that while in the West wages are controlled by unemployment or similar mechanisms (e.g., emigration from poor countries which creates an excess supply even in countries with full employment), in the USSR, the wage dynamic operates entirely on a non-western level without using any of the above means. Full employment had been achieved in the 1930s, and rural emigration did not create an excess labor supply as can be seen from the phenomenon of labor mobility reemerging in the 1950s.[76] A capitalist economy under similar circumstances of full

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raise the quality of Soviet life to the western level, given the cost of consumer goods." On page 237 Levi supplies some statistics on the prices of consumer goods: 50 dollars for a pair of woman's shoes, 35-50 dollars for a yard of wool fabric, 3.50 for a kilo of apples, etc. (also see the data concerning the scarcity of consumer goods). These prices are not exceptional. They are indicative of a price level for consumer goods higher than that of the West, due to the inability of the Soviet system to develop the secondary sector.

72. In 1964 the USSR was in fifth place for per capita production, ahead of Italy (8% difference) and Japan (25% difference); see Levi, *op.cit.*, p. 494. Levi also notes that among the seven largest industrial powers, the USSR is third in investments, but considering also military spending, it is first in non-consumer related income (Levi, *op.cit.*, pp. 494-495). Within this investment structure the primary sector occupies an extremely privileged position.

73. On the minimum wage reform, see Di Leo, *op.cit.*, p. 265; on the truly miserable extent of this minimum wage, see Levi, *op.cit.*, p. 240. After the minimum wage law was passed there was—an irony of sorts—a wage freeze for two years. It should be emphasized that the ruble-dollar exchange rate was formally responsible for the worsening of the situation of the Russian worker.

74. See Levi, *op.cit.*, pp. 236-237, note 10.

75. Schmidt, "Salari come Esplosivo," in J. Cech ed., *Le Idee del Nuovo Corso* (Bari, 1968), pp. 273ff.

76. See Di Leo, *op.cit.*, pp. 247-248; also see Levi, *op.cit.*, pp. 244-245, who notes how in 1959 the rate of unemployment was 2.6% of the labor force. This unemployment is due to those workers who quit their jobs, knowing that other and perhaps better jobs were available. This suggests that there was a considerable excess of labor "demand." In itself, an index of 2.6% for non-structural unemployment is, as Levi notes, rather high. However, this index takes on an even greater significance, when one considers the attempted suppression of labor mobility

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employment and productive development would have experienced a per capita wage boom instead of the static levels obtaining in Russia. The only exlanation lies in the fact that in the USSR the old principle according to which, when two capitalists seek a worker, wages go up, is not operative. In other words, the law of supply and demand does not exist in the Soviet system. To talk about "wages" in the USSR is only a matter of linguistic convenience.

Both Rizzi and Hilferding seem to have been correct when they characterized wages as being the non-mercantile mechanism within the plan which allows the workers to reconstitute their labor-power. In our system, wages also serve to regenerate workers' labor-power. This is true of every antatonistic system. What must be emphasized is that, in the capitalist system, it is the market that fixes the price of labor-power at a certain level according to spontaneous and blind laws. In the USSR, on the other hand, the plan fulfills this function according to its objectives. This does not happen arbitrarily, but according to the laws that govern the Soviet economy, which determine the choices of the plan. First among all these laws is that of unequal development, giving priority to the capital goods sector at the expense of the secondary, consumer goods sector. Consumption and wages, consequently, appear much lower than in the West.

We can now clarify the fundamental tendencies determining the wage fluctuations of the Russian worker. The wage of the western worker fluctuates, as Marx has shown, between a minimum necessary for biological life and a maximum close to a level that would threaten expanded reproduction, depress the rate of profit and so on. For the USSR, the minimum limit is the same, while the maximum limit is established by the needs of expanded reproduction.

However, this reproduction is not reproduction of exchange value and surplus value based on the market as in the West, but predominantly the reproduction of use-values. Priority is given to the capital goods sector in a way that is quantitatively and qualitatively different from the West. Contrary to the West, in which the development of the secondary sector promotes the primary sector, the USSR sees the development of the

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by the Soviet system, even after the repeal of the penal law in 1956. We must therefore reject D'Angelo and Palladino's theory, which suggests that the low productivity of Soviet labor implies the existence of hidden unemployment. When there is a scarcity of labor demand, unemployment, both hidden and open, exists, but when there is an excessive labor demand, one cannot speak of unemployment. Certainly labor productivity in the Soviet Union is low relative to that of the West, but this is due to the characteristics of a system that has planned a relatively extensive type of development. On the basis of this type of development, we do not have unemployment but a scarcity of labor-power.

This has perhaps resulted in a tendency by Soviet managers to compete for labor-power. However, this competition, unlike similar phenomena in a capitalist system, has not led to a rise in real wages. Instead, Soviet managers competed with each other by hoarding workers. This could only occur in a system where production quotas must be fulfilled and where there is no labor market.

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secondary sector as a hindrance to the productive capacity of the primary capital goods sector. Its ideal—impossible to realize—would be to suppress the production of consumer goods. Given this premise, it follows that the maximum level to which wages may rise is much lower than that of advanced capitalist countries, since higher real wages would necessitate a major production of consumer goods.

Theoretically, the system could increase consumption and real wages, and carry them to the western level through foreign trade (selling capital goods for consumer goods). But Russian foreign trade, before 1965, had minor importance for an economy of its complexity. There were two reasons for this. First, the Soviets justly feared integrating themselves firmly into the imperialist world market, rightly fearing the political and economic strings attached to such integration. Secondly, capital goods, in fact, Soviet products in general, are inferior in quality to those of the West and would not compete very favorably on the market. Although the USSR has considerable wealth in the form of raw materials, these are tied to local industries or have a military strategic importance that would obviously limit trade.

Having established that the Soviet wage is not a capitalist category, we might pose an even more fundamental question. Can the Russian proletariat be considered "workers" in the Marxist sense? For Marx, workers produce surplus product in the specific form of surplus-value and their labor-power assumes the commodity form.[77] The Soviet worker, however, produces surplus product and not surplus-value. Moreover, there is no wage relation determined by a mercantile exchange between himself and the State. Technically speaking, a new term should be used. But since what is important is the content and not so much the form, it is possible to speak of the Russian proletariat as workers while keeping in mind the distinctions between the capitalist market economy and the Soviet one. If, from the economic-structural viewpoint, the Soviet and the western proletariat differ, from the political viewpoint their interests converge. Both these classes are fundamental to the two systems and are exploited by them. Both can only liberate themselves through a socialist revolution. Although their situation is not identical, there is enough similarity to allow for a potential convergence and to justify calling them both proletarian classes. We will later outline some hypotheses on the future political attitude of the Russian workers. One thing, however, is certain: the Russian workers have reached a point where they reject the Soviet system but cannot solve their problems through capitalism.

77. On this point, Marx seems to oscillate a bit. In the first place he states that it is labor productivity that created exchange-value (see *Grundrisse, op.cit.*, p. 266). However, at the end of this passage (p. 273) he says that he will have to return to the argument (he will do this some years later in the works cited above). He will do this by assuming a definite and suitable position on the analysis of capitalism as a system based on the production of surplus-value. Surplus-value is here a parameter of productivity and, therefore, of exchange value.

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8. Bordiga's Thesis

The previous section clearly shows that the USSR is not a capitalist country. But to what extent are the capitalist and the Soviet systems similar? According to Bordiga, the law of the falling rate of profit operates in the Soviet economy. As proof, he points to Stalin's continuous calls for increases in productivity, which, he argues, could not be explained otherwise.[78] On the contrary, the productivity push can be explained otherwise. The USSR was forced to industrialize under the most difficult conditions. It faced the danger of imperialist aggression before 1940, international hostility after 1947 and the Cold War during its reconstruction. Furthermore, the law cannot operate because its components—surplus-value, an economy dominated by the market, the increasing organic composition of capital, and falling prices—do not obtain in Russia. We can perhaps speak of a "law of the falling rate of accumulation"[79] but, in the end, this exercise would only serve to show superficial similarities between the two systems.

Similar arguments are also valid for the law of the equalization of the rate of profit—a law which presumes the existence of an anarchic interaction of several capitals on the market. It would also be incorrect to think that the law could operate in Russia through the plan. Profit as a mercantile-capitalist category does not exist in the plan. The antagonisms and dysfunctions of the Russian economy are not, we repeat, phenomena like the competition among several capitals on the market in search of maximum profit. The equal distribution of resources and the surplus product is determined by the plan and, in most cases, the distribution is unequal. As has been noted, the primary sector grows at the expense of the secondary sector while some enterprises produce at a loss for long periods of time.[80] As for the law of value, it has been adequately shown that it cannot operate in an economy dominated by the plan and by collective property.[81] Furthermore, the plan has developed on the ruin of the law of value, in the sense that there has been a transfer of value from the agricultural to the industrial

78. See Bordiga, "Dialogue avec Staline," in *Programme Communiste* 8 (Marseilles, 1959), pp. 24ff.

79. On this see Minc, *op.cit.*, pp. 428ff, who, however, denies the existence of the law even in a "modified" form.

80. Very often, in fact, the plan decrees that some businesses must produce at a loss (see Nove, *The Soviet Economy, op.cit.*, pp. 195ff, and *Economic Rationality and Soviet Politics, or Was Stalin Really Necessary* [New York, 1964], pp. 67ff). This implies that the plan stipulates losses as well as gains. The equalization of profit is therefore not an objective of the plan (by profit we mean surplus product).

81. On this, see Preobrazensky, *The New Economics* (Oxford, 1965), pp. 160ff; Brus, *The Market in a Socialist Economy* (London, 1972), p. 89 (which, however, contradicts itself by reevaluating the mercantile categories and thereby emptying his preceding arguments of their content); Guevara, *op.cit.*; Sweezy, *The Theory of Capitalist Development* (New York, 1962), pp. 53ff. This is without doubt Marx and Engels' opinion which even the "economic revisionist" Ota Sik admits. Cf. *Plan and Market under Socialism* (White Plains, 1967), pp. 15ff. Preobrazensky believes that the basis for the law of value is reduced, where commodities and the market do not exist or are of secondary importance (as is the case with the Soviet Union).

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sector[82]—a transfer that could also occur in oligopolistic capitalism[83] but under a market system rather than a plan.[84]

As for the causes of capitalist economic crises, it is sufficient to note that whichever theory appears applicable to a capitalist society is inapplicable to the Soviet one. Soviet crises cannot derive from the falling rate of profit,[85] nor from overproduction, nor from unrealized surplus value. To repeat: there cannot be overproduction in Russia because there is no production of surplus-value. This does not conflict with the previously mentioned case of the unsold shoes: although the unsold shoes represented a waste of values, they certainly did not precipitate a crisis of overproduction as would have happened under capitalism. The wasted use-value here differs from the production of an excess of exchange value and unrealized surplus-value of the capitalist system. This is not to say that the Soviet system escapes crises and dysfunctions. Rather, its crises and dysfunctions have a different genesis and move according to different dynamics than those of a capitalist system.

For these reasons, we understand, better than a rather embarrasssed Bordiga, why the great crisis of 1929 did not spread to the USSR. Such a capitalist crisis could not extend itself to an economy having very different dynamics and contradictions. Although this is not the place to criticize Bordiga point by point,[86] we can glance at one of his major arguments,

82. Bordiga contradicts himself on this point in "L'Economie Sovietique de la Révolution à nos Jours," in *Programme Communiste* 40-42 (1967-68), p. 160, when he admits that there was a drainage of value (by means other than exchange equivalents) to the detriment of agriculture. As for evidence of the law of value, there is Stalin's declaration in *Economic Problems of Socialism, op.cit.*, p. 15. However, Stalin limits the law of value to city-country relations and maintains that it operates in only a limited fashion, subordinated to the plan (something that does not exist in capitalism) and as a transitory residue. However, Stalin's statements are not correct (as even Bordiga admits). This is evidenced by the exploitation of the countryside. It seems that in 1951 Stalin wanted to ideologically conceal the persistent robbery of the countryside, behind the parameters of the "law of value." Moreover in his tactical turns, Stalin is not even consistent since in 1937 he had admitted the fact that industry was being built at the expense of agriculture. See *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow, 1953).

83. See Sylos Labini, *Oligopoly, op.cit.*, pp. 127ff.

84. In particular, industry, being more amenable to combination, can impoverish the agricultural sector by the imposition of cartel prices. This happens only within a market where the "producers" compete for the highest profits. Thus Marx in the *Grundrisse* had noted the phenomenon of unequal exchange, although he made no specific reference to the relations between the country and city in 1857-58. In the Soviet Union, however, the exploitation of the countryside occurs according to the dictates of the plan and independently of any mercantile criteria; e.g., when the kolkhoz had to cede their goods to the state, often at a loss (below cost). On the complicated process of agricultural price variation before 1965, see Nove, *The Soviet Economy, op.cit.*, pp. 136ff. The fact that the law of equalization operates with exceptions in an oligopolistic economy does not disprove the law's validity, since every economic law is tendential. In this case, the law is operative only in the leading and dominant sector of the system, i.e., the oligopoly sector. Small and medium businesses, as well as agriculture, do not fall under the equalization law (see Sylos Labini, *op.cit.*, pp. 124ff).

85. This is the thesis of Dobb in his *Political Economy and Capitalism* (London, 1937), pp. 79ff, recently followed by Negri, "Marx sul Ciclo e la Crisi," in *Contropiano* 2 (1968), pp. 247ff.

86. Bordiga, in fact, maintains that the Soviet Union was not affected by the 1929 crisis for the following three reasons: (1) capitalist crises are crises of overproduction, and in Russia

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i.e., that the Soviet system represents a form of a monopoly state capitalism. According to Bordiga, the USSR was increasing its trade with the West and, consequently, had to introduce the principles of production for exchange.[87] Marx, of course, was familiar with the dynamics governing the exchange relations between capitalists and non-capitalist economies.[88] There was no doubt in his mind that African aborigines do not become capitalists by trading sporadically with Europeans. The interaction between diverse economies in which the stronger imposes itself and integrates the other, occurs over a long period of time—unless political force is used. Where the latter is not employed, there must be a sufficient volume of trade with the capitalist market in order to force the non-capitalist economy to adapt to capitalist laws.[89]

These conditions did not hold true for Russia before 1965. Between 1946 and 1961, the years considered by Bordiga, despite the fact that foreign trade did rise absolutely, it remained rather modest in relation to the total Russian production.[90] After 1965, with the Kosygin reforms, mercantile

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there was a large zone of consumption yet to be satisfied) (2) the Soviet Union was a young country and therefore strong; (3) the Soviet Union was isolated from the world market (see Bordiga, *Dialogato coi Morti* (Milan, 1956), p. 145). To the first argument we can respond by saying that the presence of unsatisfied needs does not exclude the possibility of a crisis, since the latter presents itself on the phenomenological level as a crisis of "effective demand." The second argument is little more than a joke if for young countries is meant backward countries with little technical capital and very few skilled workers. On the other hand, the "very young" Russian capitalist economy had its first economic crisis in 1873 when there were only some "very young" sectors (note the year: 1873—the year of the great capitalist crisis). Cf. Cerroni, *Le Origini del Socialismo in Russia* (Rome, 1965), p. 83. To the third argument one can respond that, in general, the capitalist crises also hit the marginal and backward countries. See Mandel, *Marxist Economic Theory*, vol. II, *op.cit.*, p. 562; Dobb, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism* (New York, 1963), p. 331. It is only a matter of the intensity and immediacy of the crisis. In Russia, however, from 1929 on there was an exceptional development.

82. Bordiga, *Dialogato, op.cit.*, p. 32.

88. See Marx, *Capital*, vol. II, *op.cit.*, pp. 113ff, where it is noted that an exchange between capitalist and non-capitalist economies can very well exist on the world market. In volume III, pp. 333-334, he notes the use of violence by the English against the primitive Indian communities after the subjection of India and the latter's connection, through England, to the world market. Nevertheless, in spite of the violence, the erosion of the old productive relations (which did not become perfectly capitalist through their incorporation into the world market) took place slowly. Along the same lines, see Rosa Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital* (New York, 1968), pp. 377ff, where she speaks of the prolonged attempt by the French to impose new capitalist relations on occupied Algeria. In other words, it is not enough to conquer a country and substitute their own goods and markets to those that already exist (a limited and sporadic exchange of goods exists even in pre-capitalist systems). It is also necessary that a particular economy adjust "internally" to the laws of capital—hence the use of violence to facilitate a transition that on the merely economic level would be much slower.

89. There is no doubt that the world market tends to incorporate everything. The Russians understood this very well. See Preobrazensky, *The New Economics, op.cit.*, p. 136, and Baykov, *op.cit.*

90. During 1930-31 the Russians slightly increased their trade (though this never reached large dimensions) in order to take advantage of some rather lucrative deals (for the buyers) provided by the great crisis. Russia thus profitted from the enormous difficulties of the capitalist countries. However, aside from this brief period, trade has not been all that large; on this see Baykov, *op.cit.*, pp. 265ff. From 1932 to 1946 trade progressively decreased (cf.

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categories assumed more importance (though by no means dominant importance, since they were still subordinate to the plan). This apparent turn was due mainly to endogenous causes, the pressure of internal contradictions and, less so, to the laws of the capitalist world market.

Bettelheim's analysis is similar to Bordiga's—although it shows more finesse. We will limit ourselves here to one observation: he does not maintain that the alienation of the Soviet state from the broad masses proves that it constitutes an apparatus of power in the hands of a new state bourgeoisie.[91] Instead, the alienation discloses the antagonistic (not necessarily capitalist) class-character of the USSR. The relation between state and society in Russia is quite different than in the West. If there is exploitation, it obtains within the framework of a new and different model.

As for Bettelheim's claim that the bureaucracy can only be an instrument of another class, he is basing his judgment on the western experience which is by no means universal. It is by no means inconceivable that the bureaucracy becomes autonomous, appropriates the productive apparatus, and transforms itself into a class. Perhaps a new term is needed to grasp this new reality. In any case, the problem is not one of labels but of meaning. The Soviet bureaucracy is not equivalent to western state bureaucracies because the former, as a new class, operates according to a rather different logic.

9. The Antagonistic [but not Capitalist] Class Character of the USSR

Marx drew attention to the historical-superstructural character of capitalism, i.e., the dialectical separation between political and economic life, between *citoyen* and *bourgeois*, between the state and the economic structure.[92] Within this dialectical relation, state intervention in the economy is one of the constant characteristics of all capitalist development.[93] The reason for this separation (that does not exist in the USSR where political and economic power is fused) lies in the particular characteristics of capitalist ownership and its anarchic-competitive nature. When single capitalist or managers of small businesses or large monopolies act in

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Bordiga, *L'Economie, op.cit.*, p. 183). After 1946, it notably increased until 1961 (Bordiga's data end with 1961). Even so, the main tenor of the trade relative to the Russian GNP is modest; 10.6 billion rubles in 1961 against an industrial production of 160 billion (about three-fifths of the GNP). This is one-fifteenth of industrial production and one-twentyfifth of the GNP—a very modest amount. After 1961 Russian foreign commerce increased: see Jalée, *Imperialism in the Seventies* (New York, 1973), p. 170; but so did the GNP (71% from 1960 to 1968 according to data of the Soviet agency Novosti). Thus there was no really substantial or "spectacular" change before the 1965 reform. Even now, Russia appears to be an "autarchic" country, although some factors have emerged that could lead us to think of future reversals of this tendency.

91. See Bettelheim's articles in Bettelheim and Sweezy, *The Transition to Socialism* (New York, 1971).

92. On this see Marx, "On the Jewish Question." This theme has been elaborated by Della Volpe and his school. See Della Volpe, *Umanismo Positivo ed Emancipazione Marxista* (Milan, 1964), pp. 35ff, *La Libertà Comunista* (Rome, 1969), pp. 25ff.

93. See for example, Sweezy, *Theory of Capitalist Development, op.cit.*, pp. 239ff.

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their own interests, struggling against other capitalists or other branches of the economy, an organ is required to mediate the internal conflicts of the system for the capitalist as a whole. This organ is the state.

Obviously, this does not mean that the bourgeois state performs an inter-class function. On the contrary, by mediating particular antagonisms among capitalists and groups of capitalists, the state permits the system, considered as a whole, to persist and to develop, raising its anarchy and contradictions to a higher level. In this sense, the state performs an essential capitalist function. On the other hand, it is beyond the scope of the state's function to eliminate anarchy. To do so would mean that the capitalist would have to act not for profit but for the collective interest in a coordinated planned manner. This obviously contradicts the very nature of the state and of the bourgeois class. The most the state can do on the economic as well as the judicial and political level is to mitigate certain effects of anarchy and to channel them into forms that will not destroy the market and society.

Perhaps an example will clarify our point. Marx refers to a revealing case in which a group of industrialists in Straffordshire presented a petition to the English Parliament. The industrialists had begun questioning the viability of a system that was working its base—the working class—to utter exhaustion. The working day had by now reached the intolerable length of 16 hours. If measures were not taken to limit the working day, the system may have collapsed, as laborers collapsed, or be overthrown by a workers' revolution. The majority of industrialists, however, opposed a unilateral reduction which they feared would cut profits and precipitate bankruptcy. The state did intervene with the ten-hour law, overruling opposition from the majority of the capitalists, and saved the system.[94] In effect, the English Parliament momentarily went against the short-term interests of the capitalist in favor of their long-term interests. Acting as the "collective conscience of capital," the state imposed itself on single capitalists. It forced them to rationalize and modernize exploitation: to aim more at relative rather than absolute surplus-value.

As can be seen, then, the dialectical interplay between the political and economic levels derives from the competitive and anarchic character of capitalist ownership. This dialectical separation does not obtain when the economy is governed from above by a plan. Instead, there is a broad fusion of the state with the economy. Whereas in the West the state and state-

94. It has been said that the ten-hour law was essentially a Tory revenge against the Whigs rather than a victory of the working class: see Marx, "Inaugural Address of the International Working Men's Association," in *The First International and After* (Middlesex, 1974). Such elements were undoubtedly present in the genesis of the law, but if we reread Marx (*Capital*, vol. I, *op.cit.*, p. 281) and if we take into account the law's objective significance (in the functioning of the system), then it is clear that our interpretation remains valid. Here, as in other cases, a worker's victory not followed by any revolutionary developments modernizes the system in the sense desired by the enlightened entrepreneurs of Straffordshire.

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enterprises are at the service of an autonomous and distinct class and do not have basic interests independent of it, in Russia the state has absorbed the productive apparatus and governs the economy. This explains the difference in the relationship between the state and the productive apparatus in the Soviet and capitalist systems.

10. Privatist Residues in the USSR

The Soviet reality must be considered in light of the celebrated Marxist teaching found in the *Grundrisse*.[95] Marx writes that if in a given society there are several types of productive relations (and according to Marx this is the rule), then one must specify the dominant relation, in order to uncover the fundamental socio-economic laws of that society. There is no doubt that in Russia there are residues of private ownership (this point is emphasized by Bordiga).[96] This would include small units of agricultural production (representing only 4% of the arable land),[97] small artisan production, and the construction of private housing.

The first two cases, however, represent residues of simple mercantile production. They do not exploit labor-power nor are they involved in expanded reproduction.[98] In both cases, the principle governing the process of production is C-M-C (production for consumption and not for profit as in capitalism). We need hardly add that its economic importance is not comparable to that of the state-owned sectors of the economy.[99] As for the construction of private housing (through co-operatives that often take on "free workers"), it is allowed only for purposes of direct consumption.

A different case is that of the collectives in charge of distribution. These are, in spite of their name, real state enterprises without any autonomy relative to the plan. They figure in the state budget, and their duties are classified and dealt with as subordinate to the state even from the judicial economic viewpoint.[100]

95. See Marx, *Grundrisse, op.cit.*, pp. 106-107. In another work, Marx writes: "...no hard and fast abstract lines can be drawn between the epochs of social history any more than between the epochs of geological history." As cited by Lange, *op.cit.*, p. 19 in the note.

96. Bordiga, *Dialogato coi Morti, op.cit.*, p. 61.

97. In the middle of the 1960s Russian land was divided in the following manner: 4% peasant plots, 31% sovkhoz, 65% kolkhoz. See Wenjer, "L'Economie Kolcozienne," in *Recherches Internationales a la Lumière du Marxisme* 56 (Paris, 1966), p. 132. The data furnished by Gaddi (*op.cit.*, pp. 54-55; for 1967 seem to give a further increase to the sovkhoz section.

98. This is a very well known fact. See, for example, Prokopovic, *Storia dell'Economia dell'URSS* (Bari, 1957), pp. 219ff; Levi, *op.cit.*, pp. 117ff, which states that on the basis of the Soviets' own data the kolkhozian daily wage during the Stalin era approximated 10 cents at present rates; hence the essential character of kolkhoz production: without it starvation would have been rampant.

99. At best, plot production, while enjoying an exceptional labor productivity, fluctuates between one-sixth and one-seventh of agricultural production (see, for example, Prokopovic, *op.cit.*, pp. 217ff, and, for more recent data, Levi, *op.cit.*, p. 124, where the percentage is a little more than one-sixth: 17%).

100. See Nove, *The Soviet Economy, op.cit.*, pp. 43ff.

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The case of the kolkhoz is much more complex. It is a hybrid between state and private (or associate) property—a real puzzle. What is clear is that a historical compromise lies at the base of this institution, i.e., it adjusts to the privatistic mentality of the farmers without substantially touching the centralist-bureaucratic social principles of the state plan. In other words, the state made propagandistic concessions in order to then reintegrate them into the state economy. Such reintegration has reached the point where the differences between the kolkhoz and the state sovkhoz are relatively secondary and minor. The more relevant privatistic elements of the kolkhoz refer to the private plots.[101] The kolkhoz owns animals, productive instruments, and, since 1958, tractors (but not the land). But these forms of ownership are largely meaningless since they have no real autonomy: they are closely tied to the central plan.

As for its internal organization, it should be democratic (the leaders are supposed to be elected from below). It is unlikely, however, that there is any real democracy. Russia is a profoundly undemocratic state (in the sense of workers' democracy) and it is absurd to think that the country-side could be exempted from this phenomenon. The violation of the kolkhoz democracy and the massive intervention of the state are well-known facts. One need only think of the problems of the labor squads (1950), the continued transformation of the kolkhoz into sovkhoz, the concentration of the kolkhoz into larger units, the transfer of the personnel ("the faithful") from the SMT (Machine Tractor Stations) to the kolkhoz in 1958, and the campaign against the plainsmen [*erbisti*) (1962). All this culminated in the construction of bureaucratic organs of control and direction (emanating from the party) that negated the timid advances of the preceding years.[102]

One could object that the state still exchanges with the kolkhoz for the latter's produce (as opposed to the sovkhoz, where the produce is immediately given as state property). This mercantile exchange, however, is totally illusory, since the state is free to set prices outside of any mercantile criteria (the price is usually very low and often below the costs of production). This has always been the main source of the farmers' opposition to the Soviet power.[103] The judicial formal character of the

101. On this, see Prokopovic, *op.cit.*, pp. 210ff; Mett, *I Contadini Russi 50 Anni Dopo* (Milan, 1967), pp. 81ff; Baykov, *op.cit.*, pp. 308ff; Nove, *The Soviet Economy, op.cit.*, pp. 45ff; Wenjer, *op.cit.*, pp. 145ff. The latter laments the ultra-centralization of the kolkhoz economy and of its subordination to the plan which prevents the "mercantilization" of the agrarian economy.

102. On these points, see especially Prokopovic, *op.cit.*, p. 248; D'Angelo and Palladino, *op.cit.*, pp. 159ff; Levi, *op.cit.*, pp. 125ff; Miller (and others), *Communist Economy under Change* (London, 1963), pp. 34ff. It is particularly interesting to note that the state has concentrated the kolkhoz (from 252,000 in 1950 to 36,900 in 1965). In 1962 the kolkhoz was subordinated to the state in a rather more grave and rigid manner than in the past. From 1954 to 1965 the sovkhoz have increased, possessing at present 47% of the arable land as opposed to 13% in 1954.

103. It seems to us that Bordiga (*L'Économie Soviétique, op.cit.*, p. 178) overemphasizes

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exchange merely hides an administrative appropriation of the surplus by the bureaucracy. As for the kolkhoz, they must make up for this appropriation by selling the remainder of the produce on the kolkhoz free market. As late as 1961, when the worst aspects of Stalinism no longer existed, the kolkhoz still suffered a loss of 1-2 billion rubles from their "sales" to the state (loss being defined as the difference between the costs of production and the price).[104]

The readjusting of the prices by the government in 1961-62 does not seem to have ameliorated the situation,[105] and the March, 1965, price level remained, as far as is known, lower than that of the free kolkhoz market. Thus meat on the kolkhoz free market costs 180 rubles, milk 23.4; potatoes 13.5; and vegetables 21.6. On the other hand, the state pays 8 rubles for vegetables, 15.6 for milk, 110.3 for beef, 136.3 for pork, and 6.9 for potatoes.[106] When one considers that Khrushchev's policies tended to push up prices on the kolkhoz market (through its restriction), the difference is very clear. This explains why the people in the kolkhoz insisted that the part of the produce absorbed by the state be reduced to a minimum relative to the market quota.[107] The Soviet state, in turn, responded by enforcing the opposite position, thereby exacerbating the tendencies of the Stalin era (even though they had been generally repudiated after his death). Thus, while the kolkhoz market sold 18.1% of the food-products destined for the

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the juridical-formal character of the exchange (the contract) that exists between the state and the kolkhoz. When one of the parties establishes prices outside of any capitalist-mercantile criterion and forces the other party to cede their goods below cost, then we do not have a capitalist-mercantile exchange.

104. See Gaddi, *op.cit.*, pp. 339 and 441.

105. *Ibid.*, p. 340. ("In spite of everything, for a good part of the enterprises not even these new prices managed to cover the costs that in some cases had been increased.") See also Levi, *op.cit.*, pp. 131ff. He notes that in 1962 Soviet statistics and Khrushchev himself admitted that the kolkhoz were forced to "sell" at a loss that often exceeded 50% of the cost of production. After Khrushchev's famous speech, the price of meat rose 35% (see Miller, *Communist Society, op.cit*, p. 42). Yet, the losses prior to the price rise were 49% for beef, 43% for pork, and 62% for poultry. This retouching does not, therefore, raise the price to an adequate level, let alone a mercantile level.

106. See Gaddi, *op.cit.*, pp. 343-344. It should be noted that in the USSR there are two markets of agricultural products where the prices are determined by "mercantile" criteria: one is managed by the state cooperatives that buy the kolkhoz surplus; the other is the so-called kolkhoz free market to which is added a part of the production of the small plots. The data given in the text refers to the first market. For a further explanation concerning the differences between the two types of market, see Gaddi, *op.cit.*, pp. 326ff. It should also be noted that on the free market the influence of the state cooperatives has a depressing effect on prices. It is a well-known fact that market prices are higher than those set by the state.

107. In fact, the quota of goods absorbed by the state (which unilaterally fixes the prices: negotiations are, as we shall see, only apparent) is clearly dominant. The quota that goes to the free kolkhoz market is, however, still important (in spite of being smaller). It allows the kolkhoz to replenish its supplies and thus make up for their submission to the state's extortion. In fact, Schwartz notes (*op.cit.*, pp. 264-265) that in the past the relatively small amount of produce sold on the free market brought much more income than the much larger amount delivered to the state.

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non-rural population in 1950, this proportion fell to 7.1% in 1960 and 4.9% in 1967.[108]

All of this proves how, behind the apparent act of sale, there lies a bureaucratic appropriation altogether independent of any mercantile criteria. The state simply fixes prices according to the needs of the plan at a level clearly lower than that of the market and quite often lower than the costs of production. In substance, the state does not buy anything. The power relation is such that the kolkhoz must give to the state what the state orders it to produce on the state's conditions. It can therefore be said that the state is the boss of the kolkhoz whose organizational and financial management is completely subordinated to the plan. The prerequisites of mercantile exchange (the passage of property between autonomous productive subjects or units) are completely lacking.

Thus, it follows that there is nothing private about the kolkhoz enterprises. They are functionally integrated into the planned economy guided by the state and based on definitely non-capitalist principles. This is confirmed by the fact that farmers have always preferred to work in their own plots (the kolkhoz garden) as opposed to the kolkhoz proper.[109] This says a lot about the farmers' opinions of kolkhoz democracy (which was supposed to have integrated them into the enterprise) and of the state-kolkhoz

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108. See Gaddi, *op.cit.*, p. 329. This data refers to the kolkhoz market and not to the free market. Moreover, the state cooperatives also sell the small kolkhoz stocks that, as we shall see, have considerable economic importance. The state, therefore, tries to control the production of the plots through the cooperatives, and where the cooperatives do not intervene, by simply stifling the kolkhoz market. The produce of the small plot is, as suggested by the data, being shifted from the kolkhoz market to the free market (which is controlled by the state cooperatives who pick up a part of the income of whatever is sold).

109. This can be deduced from the previously furnished data (4% of the cultivated land produces from one-seventh to one-sixth of total production, despite the technical backwardness of the labor process). Even in 1939-40 the Soviet state had to use severe measures against the kolkhozians who spurned work on the collectivized areas in order to work their own plots. Things have not changed in the post-Stalin era (as we have seen the plots continue to produce 17% of agricultural production in spite of their always modest range). See also Nove, *op.cit.*, p. 45; Mandel, *Marxist Economic Theory*, vol. II, *op.cit.*, p. 581; Miller, *op.cit.*, p. 39; Gaddi, *op.cit.*, pp. 125-126. This phenomenon has been the object of a series of Russian literary works: *Matryona's House* by Solzhenitsyn in *Stories and Prose Poems* (London, 1971), and *One Day in the "New Life"* (New York, 1963), by Abramov, which often indirectly provide a series of interesting economic insights. Gaddi admits that labor productivity is rather low on the collectivized enterprises (kolkhoz and sovkhoz, *op.cit.*, pp. 290 and 294), but refuses to recognize the higher plot productivity (even though this is evident in his own data). Perhaps it is true that the labor force employed on the plots is combined with a greater abundance of land, but this is counter-balanced by the clear difference in mechanization. Gaddi admits that the kolkhozians work in the plots "without savings of time or energy" (*op.cit.*, p. 125), and that the system drove them towards small mercantile production to which they apply themselves "with particular attention" (*op.cit.*, pp. 329-330). Now it doesn't take much to understand that "obligation and attention" are fundamental constitutive elements of productivity – elements that we find on the plots but not in the collectivized enterprises. Nor, objectively, could things have been much different given the starvation wages of the Stalin era (see Levi, *op.cit.*, p. 117) that drove the kolkhozians to squeeze their plots to the maximum in order to maintain a very modest standard of living.

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"mercantile" exchanges. In reality, the farmers have always behaved as alienated state employees and not as "co-operators" interested in the development of "their" business. The intricate debates concerning the nature of the kolkhoz property have never appealed to them.

Undoubtedly, there were zig-zags in the state-kolkhoz relationship. For example, in the years following Stalin's death some of the more brutal forms of exploitation and bureaucratic control were either eliminated or mitigated. There were some price changes (though they never even approached a "mercantile" level) and some weak attempts at decentralization. The effect of these measures should not be exaggerated. On the whole things changed very little as will become evident when we discuss the events of 1965-66. It should be added that many of these measures were never carried out. The substitution of consignment plans for production plans still left the state as arbiter of the things to be consigned, and therefore, by extension, of the things to be produced. Even the 1955 reform was practically ignored, as Khrushchev himself admitted. The same thing can be said about the 1958 reform that formally abolished the obligatory stockpile (for this stockpile the kolkhoz had to surrender large portions of their produce at ridiculously low prices).

This is what a pro-Soviet author like Gaddi writes about the 1958 reform: "Formally abolished in 1958, the stockpiling, in fact, remained in force as is almost inevitable in an economy in which acquisitions are organized and planned...it is also true that, at least until 1965, negotiations between the collecting agencies and the enterprises were often reduced to a fiction and enterprises were practically forced to accept the demands that the plan imposed. Bureaucratic to the extreme, the collecting agencies continue to have as their sole preoccupation the procurement for the state of the largest possible quantity of produce, without taking into account the effective potential, internal needs, or interests of the individual enterprises." Thus, post-Stalinist reforms did not really change very much. Moreover, during the 1958-62 period, the state undertook a series of incursions into the agrarian economy, that would be absolutely unthinkable in a capitalist-mercantile system. it is almost as if the state wanted to remove any doubt about who was the real boss in the countryside.[110]

110. It is ridiculous for Gaddi to maintain that certain transformations (from kolkhoz to sovkhoz) were in response to demands from below (*op.cit.*, p. 97). In a system where every such demand is regularly suffocated (which Gaddi himself admits; see *op.cit.*, pp. 71, 102, 219, etc.), if such demands ever succeed it is because the people at the top have an interest in their success. But given the total lack of kolkhozian democracy, and the tendency of the agricultural workers "to shut themselves up" within their own plots, it appears absurd to maintain that they really wanted a transformation of kolkhoz into sovkhoz. After all, this implies an even greater subordination (already quite notable in the kolkhoz) to the state. Gaddi seems to accept the Soviet propaganda without noticing how it does not fit in the context of his own work. Gaddi is an honest Soviophile who, on the one hand, believes in the "fatherland" of socialism and, on the other, gives us a series of data, testimony, and admissions that are on the whole rather depressing.

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In the private sector, illegal speculation or the black market occupies a special place. This is a well diffused phenomenon, as can be seen by the frequent campaigns of the Soviet state against economic crimes, for which the death penalty is meted out in extreme cases. Nevertheless, in a system as centralized and authoritarian as the Russian, it is difficult to suppose (and no one seems to support such a supposition) that the black market has supplanted the official means of distribution. In fact, the black market has a very subsidiary role. But even here, there are no capitalist productive relations. (Many people think that every private activity of a speculative character, even theft and piracy, is to be equated with capitalism.) The black market functions roughly as follows: the plan's dysfunction results in its failure to produce consumer goods in sufficient quantity or quality. Thus, certain products will be in great demand. The factory managers that produce these goods illegally take a certain quantity of these goods from the state stock and send them, either directly or through intermediaries, to the black market. These managers do not invest capital, nor do they buy labor-power with the aim of producing and realizing surplus value (for purposes of reinvestment as well as individual enrichment). In other words, these managers are not properly capitalists, but rather, thieves.

Thus, although the black market has a private character (in the sense that those people who distribute goods through the black market do so for private gain) it is not capitalist in the more rigorous sense of the word. The question arises here concerning the total weight of the private sector in the USSR. Soviet statistics tend to reduce it to a minimum, but it is obvious that they underestimate the phenomenon—particularly when it comes to the black market. The most optimistic estimates are Miller's, who says that it represents about one-quarter of the total productive and distributive activity in the USSR.[111] We would estimate it at a little less than 25%. For polemical reasons, Miller tends to overestimate its weight, especially in the case of the black market which, as stated earlier, cannot but have a subsidiary character. Given this estimate, there can be no doubt that, on the whole, the state is still the dominant force (and Miller agrees with this). This is true, not only because the state manages by itself the remaining three-quarters of the economic activities, but also because the private sector does not constitute a cohesive force. Given its absolutely heterogeneous and residual character, its possibilities for "challenging" state domination are non-existent.

The problems of an advanced industrial society like the USSR cannot be resolved through the development of production for direct consumption,

111. See Miller, *op.cit.*, p. 62. In her analysis Miller does not consider the value of the products that the USSR exports in the world market which, according to Stalin (*Economic Problems of Socialism, op.cit.*, p. 42) should be considered as commodities (in Marx a similar idea can be found in *Capital*, Vol. II, *op.cit.*, pp. 113).

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small-scale artisan production, or the black market. A challenge to the plan-dominated economy cannot be launched from these sectors. In fact, some of these residues exist only because of dysfunctions in the planned economy (e.g., the black market) and would disappear if the plan was to be replaced by the market or by socialist production.

If there are very serious problems in the Soviet economy, they must be located within its leading sector, i.e., within the framework of state industries integrated into the plan—and the fundamental dysfunctions of the Soviet economy are not dysfunctions typical of a capitalist economy. Mercantile residues are largely irrelevant. Thus, the monetary system surviving for reasons cited earlier has taken on new functions within the new economy. Small scale kolkhoz production is tolerated since it permits the kolkhoz people to make ends meet and reconstitute the necessary labor-power for the system in face of inadequate and meager salaries. Housing production for self-consumption serves to alleviate some social tensions since the state prefers to concentrate its resources elsewhere, i.e., in the development of heavy industry. And lastly, dealings in the black market and illegal speculation arise inevitably when there is a consistent shortage of consumer goods, a phenomenon unheard of in other advanced countries—except under unusual circumstances such as war.

The same is true with prices: they have largely a bookkeeping and calculating function. Prices in the state-agriculture relationship reimburse part of the costs of production necessary for the kolkhoz to reconstitute its productive stock and to perpetuate its function within the plan, and prices obtaining in the relationship between consumers and the state also operate within the logic of the plan which is radically different from that of capitalism. Even interests in Russia are not similar to the capitalist notion of interests. First of all, since interests can also be found in pre-capitalist societies, they do not necessarily imply the existence of profit-oriented production. In the USSR the interest rate in the early years was about 5-6%. In October of 1934, it increased to 8-9% for individual deposits, to 6% for the kolkhoz deposits and to 3% for those of other concerns. After 1936, the rate stabilized itself at 3% for individual and kolkhoz deposits and at 1% for those of other concerns. Clearly, interest rates are used to round up individuals' savings in order to provide enterprises with the cash necessary to pay workers' wages in cash. The whole operation is once again connected with a productive system that operates according to the plan in which mercantile and profit parameters are non-existent or secondary. The same applies to those enterprises which have ready cash at hand, which, however, cannot be readily obtained with the usual dull and heavy administrative methods. Thus, interest functions as an incentive for the various concerns to deposit their savings. The state, however, by paying interest to its concerns, merely redistributes wealth within the framework of its own property. The converse is also true: the state receives interest for its credits from the

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kolkhoz (1.75% until 1961 and .75% after; financial credits have a rate of 1 or 2%). The state receives income from a concern which, in spite of formal appearances, already belongs to the state.

Given this kind of situation, banks have functions and duties that are quite different from those of western banks. Not only do they handle funds in a different manner, but they function as administrative entities and not as speculative-mercantile enterprises. Financing is a function of the dictates of the plan, and not of market stimulations. On the whole, banks are mainly controlling agencies for state enterprise (through its bookkeeping functions and productivity checks).

11. State Property in the USSR

Recent debates concerning East European legal structures throw further light on the nature of state property.[112] No one denies that in Russia and in Eastern European countries (Yugoslavia excepted) there is real state ownership of the Soviet enterprises (including the kolkhoz). Yet, even in the Stalin era, a Soviet jurist, Venediktov, coined the term and concept of "law of operative administration" to indicate the enterprises' autonomous right over the goods entrusted to them.[113] It should be remembered that the term "right" usually indicates a power granted for realizing one's own independent interest. Thus, it is clear that such a conception tends to protect the interests of the enterprise against those of the state boss.[114] If, however, the term "right of operative management" referred to the power of the enterprise to dispose of its goods within the limits of the plan and its goals, then we would have to talk of a power of management in the higher interest of the state granted for realizing the goals of the plan.

Actually, even though it maintained a rigid control over the productive apparatus, the state could not decide all the details a priori. A certain autonomy had to be left to the managers of the enterprises. This "executive autonomy" existed even in Stalin's era.[115] This, however, does not conflict with the bureaucracy's ownership and the plan's implementation from above. Even in capitalist enterprises, the board of directors of large corporations cannot decide every detail that each branch must perform. Thus,

112. Cf. the proceedings of the Tremezzo convention on Lake Como (1968) which gave a clear picture of the nature of the debates of the Soviet and East European jurists on this point, published in *Rivista di Diritto Commerciale* 1 (1969), pp. 19ff. and 116ff.

113. See Venediktov, *La Proprietà Socialista dello Stato* (Turin, 1953). For a wide range of Russian judicial theories concerning economic law, see Cerroni, *Il Pensiero Giuridico Sovietico* (Rome, 1969), pp. 219ff; Villari, *Le Forme Organizzative nel Diritto Sovietico* (Milan, 1964), pp. 22ff; Crespi-Reghizzi, *L'Impresa nel Diritto Sovietico* (Padua, 1969), pp. 224ff.

114. This was well pointed out by Eörsi (see "Atti del Convegno di Tremezzo," *op.cit.*, p. 49).

115. On this, see Geschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, 1962), pp. 290ff and Ronsthein, *Profilo dell'Economia Sovietica* (Turin, 1951), pp. 104ff, who emphasizes the so-called director's fund (often comprising 20% and more of the enterprise's profits).

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once basic decisions are made, a certain executive autonomy is left to subordinate functionaries in the branches. Ultimately, however, it is the corporation, i.e., the capitalist shareholders, who determine the general economic activity, who decide the allocation of resources, etc. The branch managers have only a subordinate power that they must exercise in the interests of the corporation. In this respect, the function of Soviet managers is somewhat similar. Both types of managers can only exercise their power in the interests of the owner (i.e., either the Soviet state or the stockholders).

From this viewpoint, we cannot talk about enterprises' autonomous rights in the Soviet Union up to 1965. In a system in which the state, through the plan, decides the level and deployment of investment, wages, the level of employment, the quantity and quality of the goods produced, etc., one cannot counterpose the rights of an enterprise over its own goods to that of the state. After all, the state can, among other things, merge, split, close, reorganize, etc., the individual enterprises. This is by no means a situation of double ownership (of the state and of the enterprise) but of only one ownership (that of the state). The power of the enterprise (and, therefore, of the director: the working class does not count for anything in the Soviet system) is limited to that of executive management within the framework of the plan.

The debate among the Soviet jurists on this matter has a profound significance, not because of legal, but because of social implications. It testifies to the existence of tendencies since the Stalin era seeking to corrode state ownership to the advantage of the individual enterprises.[116] Already in economic debates in 1962, many economists sought to shift the axis of the economy from the state to the firm. This economic discussion is reflected at the legal level in the work of Venediktov and his school: the formal recognition of the administrative rights of the firm occured in 1961, while Liberman's polemic developed in 1962. Yet, the legal recognition in 1961 of the enterprises' rights to the administrative management over its goods has substantially changed things. After all, this "right" is defined by Soviet law as the power of the enterprise to utilize its goods "according to the objective of their activity, the duties assigned to it by the plan, and the destination of the goods."[117] Such a legal definition does not recognize any autonomous interest independent of the plan.

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116. On this, see Geschenkron, *op.cit.* This debate originated, among other things, in Stalin's polemic (*Economic Problems of Socialism, op.cit.*, pp. 39ff and 63ff) with Notkin, Sanina and Wenjer. The latter tended to emphasize the role of the market—much to Stalin's displeasure.

117. See Szermai, in "Atti del Convegno di Tremezzo," *op.cit.*, p. 35. A number of interesting positions emerged at the convention that confirm our theory. Thus, the Bulgarian Professor Stalev maintained that, "the operating administration is more a function than a real right of state enterprise" (*ibid.*, pp. 41ff). Yet, a right cannot be equated with an administrative function. Professor Szermai (*ibid.*, p. 34) observed that the question in itself has nominal value. He doubted that it makes any real difference whether the enterprises have a

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Clearly, this formal concession to the forces seeking business autonomy is a recognition of their political strength—something confirmed by the extensive legal and economic reforms of 1965-66.[118] After 1965 the situation was slightly modified. Now the enterprises have the right to refuse useless and excessive supplies of goods by giving a ten day notice to the supplying enterprise. They can also refuse supplies when they are no longer needed to realize the plan. In some cases, the firms can modify the conditions of the contracts when this does not interfere with the realization of the plan. They can also freely sell those products that are not distributed according to the dictates of the plan.[119] These innovations, however, should not be overemphasized. The reform does not challenge the economically dominant position of the plan.[120] Moreover, with the bureaucrats' renewed offensive culminating with the Czech invasion, many of these innovations were rescinded.

Here, we have had to anticipate a number of the conclusions that will be reached on the basis of a more thorough discussion of the 1965 reforms and the social forces that propelled them. This partial anticipation was necessary in order to establish the state character of Soviet ownership as opposed to those tendencies that attempt to limit it. These tendencies are not mere legal chatter: they correspond to a definite social reality. Before the 1965 reforms, these tendencies did not have the strength to openly challenge the bureaucracy. Instead, they attempted to corrode the power of the plan and bureaucratic ownership by the more subtle and indirect means of legal interpretation. This, however, did not hinder the state from forcing its directives on the enterprises in a totally authoritarian manner.

12. Conclusions

The preceding rules out that there was a capitalist system in the USSR from 1928 to 1965. Nevertheless, the USSR does share some characteristics

right or a function. What this seems to mean is that the question is not merely a legal one, but concerns power relations between the state and the enterprises.

The Romanian Professor Jonescu tried to distinguish two rights (those of the state and those of the enterprise) on a merely psychological basis. This is extremely weak and ultimately shows the tenuous character of the right that he wants to attribute to the enterprises.

118. Before the reforms of 1965 the autonomy of the enterprises, with reference to their ability to negotiate contracts among themselves, was almost non-existent. Concerning the innovations of the reform, the Soviet jurist Joffe writes: "Up until a little while ago this relation [between plan and business autonomy—A. Carlo] was determined by giving priority to the directives of the plan, and by setting up subordinate and sequential economic contracts within a fixed and unchangeable schema" (in Novozhilov and Strumilin et al, *La Riforma Sovietica in URSS* [Rome, 1969], p. 118).

119. On this, see Rossi, "Atti del Convegno," *op.cit.*, p. 82ff.

120. Even after the 1965 reform, the plan directly determined the production and distribution of approximately 20,000 scarce or vital products. With respect to secondary products, the enterprises could arrange things among themselves through the use of contracts. At present, there is a network of 120 department stores that distribute 620 products made through free negotiations (see Loeber, "Atti del Convegno," *op.cit.*, p. 65). One can easily infer the relative importance of the two sectors by comparing the number of goods they produce and distribute.

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with capitalism. Most important is the dominant role of expanded reproduction, even though in Russia such reproduction does not come about through the laws of the market and production for surplus-value. On the contrary, we are confronted with the expanded reproduction of use-values instead of exchange-values—a situation that indicates a certain resemblance to socialism as hypothesized by Marx.[121] Yet, the system cannot be called socialist because of the presence of exploitation (which implies the existence of a dominant class appropriating the surplus labor of subordinate classes) and because of the alienation of the workers from the productive apparatus.

The Soviet system also exhibits certain traits similar to feudalism, e.g., the fusion of public power and control. Feudalism, however, unlike the Soviet system, was a type of agrarian society based on production for immediate consumption, in which expanded reproduction was transitory and secondary. There was nothing in this society that resembled planned mass industrial production. Thus, the political and economic fusion found in the USSR has rather different roots than those found in feudal societies. Furthermore, in feudalism, although political and economic powers are fused, they are also atomized. This corresponds to the fragmentation of the feudal world into various self-contained political-economic units (the fiefs).[122] In contrast, the Soviet Union reveals a high degree of centralization. For these reasons, we must reject recent attempts to compare the USSR to a "feudal system."[123]

The USSR is a class society that partly resembles other class societies. In certain respects, however, it appears to resemble socialism. But these similarities are very superficial. The USSR is neither socialist nor capitalist, nor does it exhibit the feudal or Asiatic mode of production. It is a new (antagonistic) system with its own specific dynamic in which elements similar to other systems acquire a new function. From this viewpoint, it is inappropriate to refer to the Soviet Union as a transitional society understood as a society in which the proletariat has seized power and implements a conscious plan of socialist transformation. Following Rizzi, we will call the Soviet

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121. See Marx, *Capital*, vol. II, *op.cit.*, pp. 493ff, where he speaks of expanded reproduction in a socialist society as a reproduction of use-values. We have already noted that the category of use-value applies to the secondary sector in the USSR. Stalin (*Economic Problems of Socialism, op.cit.*, p. 15) and Mandel (*Marxist Economic Theory*, vol. II, *op.cit.*, p. 567), have a rather different understanding of this exchange. They forget that in the USSR exchange and exchange-values are subordinated to the plan and to the production of use-values. Thus, they assume an importance quite different from that in mercantile economies. Moreover, Stalin and Mandel forget that there can only be commodities, where production is carried out by independent economic units.

122. On this see Marx, *Precapitalist Economic Formations* (London, 1964), pp. 125ff; Bloch, *Feudal Society* (London, 1961), pp. 60ff; and Brentano, *Le Origini del Capitalismo* (Florence, 1954), pp. 6ff.

123. See Rizzi, *Il Collettivismo, op.cit.*, p. 171, who compares the USSR to ancient Sparta. The same criticisms apply to Wittfogel.

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system "bureaucratic collectivism," to characterize it as a system dominated by the collective property of a central political class bureaucracy.[124]

II.
Bureaucratic Collectivism.

1. Rizzi's Theses.

Up to 1939, in his polemics with Trotsky, Rizzi held that a new type of ownership had been developed in the USSR. In this new system, the whole productive apparatus (except for secondary elements) belonged to a class as a whole and not to its individual members. There is a qualitative difference between the capitalist economy regulated by the blind laws of the market and the anarchic and competitive interaction of several autonomous capitals, and the Soviet economy regulated by the plan. Even the method of appropriating surplus product is different: thus, in Russia, it is inappropriate to talk about the dominance of surplus-value and profit.[125]

Yet, Rizzi's views are problematic on several grounds.[126] First, he argues that bureaucratic collectivism is a world-wide phenomenon which will, in all probability, replace capitalism as well. Thus, Rizzi found the various expressions of this "universal" historical tendency not only in Stalinism, but also in fascism, Nazism, and Roosevelt's New Deal.[127] Secondly, Rizzi's analysis ignores the problems of the historical genesis and contradictions

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124. The central bureaucracy refers to a leading elite in the state party. As for the internal organization of this class, Kuron and Modzelewsky write (*op.cit.*, p. 29): "Membership in the central political bureaucracy implies effective participation in the elaboration of the political and economic decisions fundamental to national development. It is practically impossible to express in precise numbers the extent of this elite; even an approximate evaluation would necessitate politically impossible sociological studies. At any rate, what is most important is to know not so much the internal organization of the bureaucracy, but its function in a society and in the process of social production." There is no doubt that major political and economic decisions are made independent of the wishes of the great masses of people. Such decisions are monopolized by a restricted elite whose upper echelon is clearly visible (the leaders and higher functionaries of the party-state as well as the upper levels of the military hierarchy—who were originally closely interconnected with the ruling party apparatus: Zukov, Voroshilov, Bulganin for a time, and Gretko).

Concerning the police apparatus Bienkowski, in *Burocrazie e Potere Socialista* (Bari, 1970), pp. 98ff, maintains that it suffocates the political apparatus, as exemplified by the Stalinist experience. Stalin, however, was a politician who made use of the police for political ends, and eventually physically eliminated the heads of this police apparatus (Yogoda, Ejov, Dserdsinsky, Menjusky, Beria, etc.). From an economic and structural viewpoint, this does not mean that the interests of the police were incompatible with and independent of those of the political apparatus. In its leading circles the police constituted a fraction of the dominant bureaucracy.

125. See Rizzi, *Il Collettivismo Burocratico, op.cit.* In a more recent work, he generally reaffirms his position: see Rizzi, "La Contestazione Marxista ed i suoi Precursori," in *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia* 1 (1969).

126. Specifically, we have found it necessary to elaborate the problem of consumer goods for reasons that will become evident shortly.

127. Rizzi, *Il Collettivismo, op.cit.*, pp. 92ff.

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within the system which he sees as a monolithic reality.[128] Finally, he sees a return to the nineteenth century market and perfect competition as the remedy for the bureaucratic cancer. Furthermore, on the whole, Rizzi's arguments are not always fully elaborated.

One of Rizzi's main arguments is that, unlike under capitalism, in bureaucratic collectivism, the worker is tied to the means of production.[129] But there was labor mobility in the USSR before 1940. The worker could change his work place (even though he was still working for the same boss). It was only after 1940 that labor mobility was abolished, and the worker was tied (not altogether successfully) to the work place. At any rate, after 1956 there was a return to the pre-1940 situation. Thus, the firm tie which bound the laborer to his own means of production is not an essential characteristic of bureaucratic collectivism. The fundamental tie is with the state which, except for marginal residues, owns all the productive apparatus.

A much more serious point in need of investigation is the indiscriminate confusion between bureaucratic collectivism and such phenomena as Stalinism, Nazism, fascism, and Roosevelt's "New Deal"—a view that Rizzi shares with Hilferding and Burnham.[130] What all three of these writers do is to extrapolate some relatively secondary features from the historical process (state intervention and authoritarianism) as the fundamental causes of bureaucratic collectivism, Stalinism, fascism, and the New Deal. These characteristics, however, are more or less typical of all class societies; state intervention in the economy, for instance, appears fundamental in the whole history of capitalism. The unquestionable increase of state intervention brought about by the greater complexity and contradictory nature of the system in the imperialist phase does not radically change things. Such intervention has always existed in capitalist regimes to maintain rather than to destroy the bourgeoisie.[131] Stalinist state intervention, on the

128. Thus, in 1967, he generally reiterates his 1939 theses, without meaningfully elaborating the problem of the system's "explosive" contradictions and its ability to contain them. More recently, he refers to Russia as a feudal system. There, the Soviet system is seen as a type of "millenarian" society, i.e., a very static one.

129. Rizzi, *Il Collettivismo, op.cit.*, pp. 80 and 83. Rizzi sees this phenomenon as a continuation of serfdom (which is consistent with his recent theory of a feudal USSR). As we have seen, the situation of the Russian worker is quite different. The tying of the worker to the means of production must be seen in the context of an industrial society. However, the system whereby the Russian peasant works both on his small plot as well as for a large enterprise, does bear some formal resemblance to serfdom where the peasant divided his labor between his own small plot and that of the landlord. Yet, the kolkhoz (and the sovkhoz) are not "feudal enterprises." They are integrated in a planned economy that has nothing to do with feudalism. Moreover, the kolkhoz worker is in part paid directly (although with very meager wages). Finally, the large emigration of peasants to the cities (essential for industrial development) demonstrates that the land-peasant ties, essential for serfdom, do not operate in Russia.

130. See Burnham, *op.cit.*, pp. 196ff; and Hilferding, *State Capitalism, op.cit.*, p. 337.

131. Marx wanted to devote an entire volume of *Capital* to state intervention in the economy. An outline of this can be found in the *Grundrisse, op.cit.* But even in *Capital,* Marx dwells on the function of state intervention in the economy. He indicates how it has been central, both during the phase of original accumulation, as well as during the "laissez faire"

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other hand, sought to destroy the bourgeoisie (the nepmen and the kulaks) along with the market.

Nazi state intervention was also qualitatively different from its capitalist counterpart. As is well known, after the advent of Nazism, capital income rose past the highest level reached in the previous epoch.[132] The Nazis had eliminated their left wing (Rhoem, Strasser) that threatened to go too far beyond a certain romantic and petit-bourgeois anti-capitalism. They did destroy some individual capitalists, but only to give the system the necessary means to carry out an imperialist politics already outlined by Hilferding in 1910.[133] Except for the left wing which was physically eliminated in 1934, the Nazi never questioned private ownership and the market. This is documented by increases in profits, the compression of wages, imperialism in the Krupp's interests, and the many ties that the Nazis had with large capital (Göring in particular).[134]

Rizzi's claim that he had predicted that if the Nazis invaded Russia, they would preserve the kolkhoz arrangement, is ridiculous.[135] If Rizzi's contention were correct, it would lead to absurd conclusions: it would not allow us to explain why, after the Nazi invasion, large industries were distributed in ownership or management to German trusts, or dismantled and taken to Germany. Nazi "collectivism" would have had to be not only one-sided, but also peasant-based—although Germany was an industrial country. One would also wonder why the collective tendencies to be realized in Russia did not manifest themselves in the German country-side (where there were Junkers' properties to expropriate) or in other occupied countries.

The Nazis' retention of the kolkhoz must be explained otherwise. Since it was not possible to dismantle the Ukranian plains and carry them to Germany (as was done with certain industries), the Nazis had two alternatives. They could either abolish the kolkhoz property and return it to the old owners or to the Junkers and German settlers. Or, they could keep the kolkhoz for a while and heavily exploit it in order to supply the Reich. The

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phase. Cf. the chapter in *Capital* dedicated to the ten-hour law, which, as we know, was passed precisely when "laissez faire" was in full swing; as well as the chapter devoted to primitive accumulation (see Marx, *Capital*, vol. I, *op.cit.*, pp. 278ff, and 713ff).

132. On this, see Sweezy, "The Illusion of the Managerial Revolution," in *The Present as History* (New York, 1953). Burnham maintained on the basis of a "friend's" information that capital income was about 5% of total income (cf. *The Managerial Revolution, op.cit.*, p. 238). In reality, as Sweezy notes, the figure was about 28% in 1938 as against 20.9% in 1933 and 22.19% in 1929 (in the pre-nazi period). For a similar perspective, see Dobb, *Studies, op.cit.*, p. 372; Bettelheim, *L'Économie Allemande, op.cit.*, pp. 212 and 42; C. Wright Mills, *Power, Politics and People* (New York, 1963), p. 175.

133. See Hilferding, *Il Capitale Finanziario, op.cit.*, pp. 483ff.

134. The literature on the ties between fascism and large capital is immense. The following are only a few fundamental works: Guérin, *Fascism and Big Business* (New York, 1973); Collotti, *La Germania Nazista* (Turin, 1962); Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (New York, 1960); Milliband, *op.cit.*, pp. 88ff.

135. Rizzi, *Il Collettivismo, op.cit.*, p. 151. A similar comparison between Nazism and Stalinism is made in Aron's *The Opium of the Intellectuals* (London, 1957), pp. 13ff.

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latter alternative was chosen as the more functional solution during the ongoing war.[136] The massive reforms implied by the first alternative would have created chaos and lowered the level of production. Although productivity is higher in private plots than in collective concerns, the dismemberment of those collectivities would have resulted in an unstable and confused political-military situation temporarily counter-productive to Nazi aims. A massive influx of German settlers before final victory, or a junkerization of the Ukraine, would certainly have created economic confusion and serious social tensions. Similarly, the return of the land to the previous owners (something that even Hitler didn't want) would have alienated any potential German sympathy from anti-Bolshevik farmers.[137] Given this state of affairs, the decision to postpone dissolving the kolkhoz and the sovkhoz was indeed prudent and justified. It is also understandable why the Nazis treated the Russian farmers differently from the proletariat (who were considered irreconcilable). Thus, in February 1942, the kolkhoz farmers were given their land, which could even be expanded (although in reality poverty and war narrowed any such possibilities). Land concessions, the maintenance of the kolkhoz and the delaying of the Germanization of agricultural property were all part of a strategy aimed at winning over the peasants who still resented Soviet power,[138] and to gain their support for an eventual victory.[139] This is what explains the maintenance of the kolkhoz structure and not a strange, partial, and contradictory Nazi bureaucratic collectivism.

As for Italian fascism, we need only refer to the works of Guérin, Mira, Salvatorelli, Rossi and Salvemini who have shown the existence of organic ties between fascism and large capital—even during the demagogic "reforms" of the Salò Republic.

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136. On this, see Broué, *Storia del Partito Comunista dell'Urss* (Milan, 1966), p. 496. Broué refers to the German experts who advised that the return of the land into private hands be postponed until after the war, since such a solution at that time would result in a fall in productive capacity, thereby compromising the region's ability to supply the Reich. These circumstances forced the Nazis to adopt a different kind of tactic—that of winning over the peasant masses.

137. There was a plan to return the land to private hands, but it wouldn't have returned it to its old owners. It was not in the Germans' interest to give them back their power (see Broué, *op.cit.*, pp. 494-495). The final solution was to make Russia into a German India, i.e., to subordinate all its capital to German interests.

138. On this, see Broué, *op.cit.*, p. 497. Although Nazi reforms did not really touch the cooperative system (it was renamed communal property), they tended to privatize the countryside. Of course, this process was to be completed after the war.

139. The Nazis failed in realizing this objective. Their reforms could only be of a very limited nature. Moreover, after the initial German defeats, the kolkhozians were much more cautious in their relations with the invaders. This caution probably existed much earlier, given the nature of Nazi propaganda, i.e., the idea that the Slav is sub-human. More important was the fact that the cooperatives were taxed very heavily in order to meet Germany's needs. Even Stalin began to look good after the countryside became an immense forced-labor camp. Nazi politics, caught between objectively contradictory needs, floundered. By 1943, Nazi relations with the collaborationists had become irretrievably strained (see Broué, *op.cit.*, pp. 498ff).

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Both Burnham and Rizzi's arguments related to the New Deal seem to be grounded in the fact that Roosevelt's politics antagonized individual capitalists. This, however, was certainly not the first time in history that the more dynamic sectors of a class imposed themselves on the majority of that class—especially when that majority did not have any viable political alternative and faced the masses' distrust and hostility as in 1933. It is in situations such as this that the bourgeois state apparatus, dominated by an "enlightened" bourgeoisie and a reformist minority, implements policies to save the system against the prejudices of the old and politically paralyzed capitalists. Clearly, a continuation of Hoover politics (an exponent of the traditional circles) and its economic inactivity would have had disastrous consequences.[140] As is well known, it was Roosevelt's "interventionism" and pragmatism that allowed the system to at least contain the crisis (which was overcome only in 1941 with war expenditures).[141] Increasing public expenditures first in the civil sector and then in the military sector, provided additional outlets for surplus value. Today, American military expenditures (often considered useless even from a military viewpoint)[142] have had a determining influence in the post-war boom.[143] If the New Deal were intended to weaken capitalism, it seems to have been inspired by the strange principle of giving vitamins to the patient before administering the poison.

2. *Socio-historical Origins of the System*

The historical origins of bureaucratic collectivism are to be located in the crisis of the proletarian dictatorship in Russia. I have discussed this problem elsewhere.[144] In a nutshell, as a result of the civil war and the imperialist encirclement, industrial production dropped to 13% of the 1913 level.[145]

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140. Hoover's inaptness is hilariously outlined by Galbraith in his *The Great Crash, 1929* (Boston, 1951), pp. 142ff.

141. See Baran and Sweezy, *Monopoly Capital, op.cit.*, pp. 159ff; Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal* (New York, 1963), pp. 332ff; Williams, *The Contours of American History* (Cleveland, 1961); Nevins and Commanger, *The Pocket History of the United States* (New York, 1967), pp. 471ff; Guérin, *Le Mouvement Ouvrier aux Etats Unis* (Paris, 1968), pp. 55ff.

142. See Baran and Sweezy, *op.cit.*, p. 212.

143. *Ibid.*, p. 207; Kidron, *Western Capitalism since the War* (London, 1970), pp. 48ff; Julien, *America's Empire* (New York, 1971), pp. 263ff.

144. See my "Lenin on the Party," *Telos* 17 (Fall, 1973), pp. 2ff. In his article on "The State and Revolution," *op.cit.*, Milliband takes a number of positions that objectively conflict with mine. Milliband maintains that the involution of the proletarian dictatorship was not caused by the particular conditions existing in Russia at that time, but the lack of a model of political mediation in which to articulate the proletarian state. In short, the degeneration is ultimately traced back to the theoretical deficiencies found in Lenin's celebrated pamphlet on the state. It is as if a deficiency in theory could determine a historical social involution. The consciousness-existence relationship is dealt with in a totally idealist fashion. In reality, things were just the opposite. It was the prohibitive situation in Russia that, by preventing the emergence of an autonomous practical-political experiment of the proletariat, led to an adjusted theory of the state that integrated the gaps in Lenin's writing.

145. See Broué, *op.cit.*, p. 172; Ronsthein, *op.cit.*, p. 31.

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Moreover, the best elements of the proletariat either died during the course of the war or were absorbed in the state machine and its bureaucratic routine, thereby separating themselves from their class origins.[146] Finally, for a complex variety of reasons to be examined later, the proletarian regime was unable to establish an organic relationship with the peasant masses—at least for the short run.

The terms of the problems are quite clear: the proletariat was numerically drained, dispersed and deprived of its vanguard elements (it was no longer a class-for-itself in the Marxian sense); the peasants (a rather heterogeneous group) tended to distrust the Bolshevik power; and the other classes (for example, the petit-bourgeoisie) oscillated uncertainly. The situation in 1920-21 was tragic: it required decisions that were both drastic and decisive. In such a context, power became separated from the masses and concentrated in the hands of a restricted elite that claimed to govern in the name of the proletariat. This phenomenon was aggravated by the need to revert to the personnel of the old czarist apparatus to run the new state since the Soviets had become empty formal structures.

The pace of events quickened in 1921. The congress, the frontal attack against the Workers' Opposition,[147] Lenin's struggle in the last years of his life against the swelling bureaucracy—all these were steps in the evolution of a situation that became increasingly worse. Without doubt, the NEP allowed at least a short-run renewal of industrial production[148] and a corresponding numerical growth of the proletariat. By this time, however, the

146. On this, see Guérin's review of Lewin's book in *Autogestion* 4, pp. 177ff.

147. Near the end of her life, Rosa Luxemburg noted an increasing tendency towards jacobin authoritarianism in the Russian experience. See *The Russian Revolution and Leninism or Marxism* (Ann Arbor, 1961), pp. 68ff; and Serge, *Year One of the Russian Revolution* (London, 1972), pp. 354ff. At the end of 1920, Lenin himself admitted that Russia was a bureaucratically deformed workers' and peasants' state.

148. In his "The New Economic Policy and the Tasks of Political Education Departments," in *Collected Works*, vol. 33, *op.cit.*, pp. 61ff, Lenin pointed out that a system of small peasant ownership was dominant in Russia (after the expropriation of the large property owners) and from this he concluded that the country was not ready for socialism. It was therefore necessary to turn towards the NEP, towards an "anomalous" policy whereby the non-bourgeois state would temporarily permit the bourgeoisie to survive. On the capitalist character of the NEP, see Bordiga, *L'Economie, op.cit.*, pp. 228ff. This can be readily seen in the fact that agriculture (at that time the most important sector) was in private hands as was 83.4% of the enterprises in the commercial sector and 20% of industrial production (cf. Mandel, *op.cit.*, vol. II, p. 550). But even in the state industrial sector, enterprises ran independently of the state (from the financial and commercial viewpoint). Through free negotiations on the market they sought to realize the greatest possible returns on the least costs (cf. Dobb, *op.cit.*, pp. 131ff and 126ff). But even Dobb, who tries to stress the "socialist" character of state enterprises, cannot deny that the only difference between state and private enterprises was in terms of ownership. Both types acted like private enterprise with respect to their individual autonomy and their search for market-profits (*ibid.*, p. 137). By and large, the market clearly prevailed over the plan: on page 138 Dobb writes of "a return to the market economy." It is therefore absurd to discuss the predominance of "socialist principles" in this phase. Accordingly, we must doubt even Preobrazensky's thesis, which claims that the plan predominated over the market before the end of NEP (see *The New Economics, op.cit.*, pp. 129ff). Even if we accept Preobrazensky's

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process of bureaucratization was quite advanced, and a workers' political vanguard could not be immediately reconstituted.

In 1927, there was a major change in Soviet policy. The "left" opposition had by that time been definitely subdued. Thus, the restraining influence of the Bukharinist "right" on the Stalinist "center" had also come to an end. With Trotsky out of the way, Stalin no longer needed Bukharin as an ally, and could begin his policy of forced industrialization (the old battlehorse of the "left") without any fear of a Trotsky-Zinoviev opposition. There were two fundamental reasons for forced industrialization: one internal and the other external. Internally, the power of the kulaks and the nepmen was on the rise. In retrospect, these developing bourgeois forces could have attempted to gain power by subordinating the political-state bureaucracy to their own interests.[149]

Externally, there was the danger of imperialist aggression. This fact has often been underemphasized.[150] The hostile imperialist attitude, however, can be seen in a number of sensational events (such as the diplomatic break with England). The isolation of the USSR was intensified by the about-face of Chiang Kai-shek. Even if there was no imminent danger of war, the presence of a powerful and imperialist system still posed the problem of economic development. A weak and backward USSR could easily have been economically and politically crushed. On the whole, the country seemed to be surrounded by states that since 1920 had been openly hostile to Soviet power. In that year, Lenin, following Bukharin, held that the capitalist powers, faced with the danger of socialism, would overcome their internal differences and form a political-military "holy alliance" against the revolution.[151]

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thesis, however, we need modify only the chronology and not the substance of our argument. We would merely have to claim that, through the plan, the bureaucracy (which was already quite powerful by the end of 1920) was taking over the productive apparatus during the NEP, capitalizing on the weakness of other social classes. Thus, the 1928-29 events would represent the final phase of a process already largely consumed, and not a sharp break as we have maintained. In both cases, however, the fundamental causes of the process would remain those that we have indicated.

149. During these years, the relations with the kulaks and the nepmen (particularly the former) worsened because of the threat to agriculture posed by the "scissors crisis." In 1927-28 the kulaks slowed down their provisioning of the cities and threatened them with starvation. (See Baykov, *op.cit.*, p. 137; Geschenkron, *op.cit.*, p. 139; Lewin, "L'Immediato Retroterra della Collettivizzazione Sovietica," in *Giovane Critica* 21; Lisa Foa, "Studi e Dibattiti sulla Collettivizzazione Agricola in Urss," in *Rivista Storica del Socialismo* 30, p. 11). According to Geschenkron, this raised the spector of a deurbanization of the USSR. In 1928-29, the well-to-do farmers had gone as far as not planting their crops (see Lewin, *op.cit.*, p. 18).

150. On the nature of this war psychosis, see Deutscher, *The Prophet Unarmed, op.cit.*. One who has underemphasized this fact is Erlich (*The Soviet Industrialization Debate 1924-28* [Cambridge, 1960] pp. 167ff) and Di Leo (*Operai, op.cit.*, pp. 124ff).

151. See Lenin, "Glosse a Bucharin," in *Critica Marxista* 45 (1967), p. 322, where he comments with a "très bien" on the following assertion of Bukharin "...The fall of the imperialist system leads the imperialists to desire collaboration among themselves within the framework of a unique world economy." Lenin's approval of Bukharin's point refers to economic collaboration, but also includes political-military collaboration—its logical instrument.

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Much had happened by then, and the USSR remained the reference point for all anti-capitalist and anti-colonialist movements. This justified the capitalist countries' hostility towards Russia—especially if we recall that these countries, during these years, were mostly dominated by right-wing forces. Thus, the grip that these conflicts had on the USSR would not be loosened. The hostility of the capitalist countries, at least on the political-economic level, fully justified Molotov's statement: "War came close to us more than once in these years, the economic war against the USSR has been conducted on various sectors of the international market, and conducted, moreover, without a moment of rest."[152]

For these reasons, forced industrialization became a "necessity". During 1928-29, with the end of the NEP, the beginning of integrated planning and forced collectivization, Stalin's program was translated into reality. And with it began a type of economy profoundly different from capitalism. Two fundamental factors profoundly influenced Russia's development: (a) the increasing autonomy of the state relative to a civil society in ruins; and (b) the need to proceed on a path of rapid economic development.

3. The System's Fundamental Character, Dynamic, and Contradictions

The basic contradiction of the Soviet system comes from the fact that the productive forces, at a certain level of their development, conflict with the relations of production. This also occurs in capitalism[153] where, however, it assumes the specific form of a "market" economic crisis. As already indicated, the same is not the case in the USSR. In the Soviet Union, this basic contradiction is expressed in the following three ways: (a) the irremediable disproportion between the primary sector (capital goods) and the secondary sector (consumer goods); (b) the impossibility of a bureaucratically centralized plan to coordinate all aspects of the economy at a certain level of development of the productive forces; and (c) the low labor productivity that is revealed, among other things, in low-quality products.[154]

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152. Cited by Ronsthein, *op.cit.*, p. 32, where the hostile situation confronting Russia during those years is amply documented.

153. The conflict between forces and relations of production has been seen to apply only to antagonistic systems with expanded reproduction, and not to all antagonistic systems as Marx seems to have believed in the celebrated "Preface." See Schmidt, *The Concept of Nature in Marx* (London, 1971). Bureaucratic collectivism, however, does have expanded reproduction and it operates according to specific laws. Thus the conflict between the forces and relations of production assumes a specific character in the Russian case.

154. Mandel (*op.cit.*, vol. II, p. 593) maintains that the basic contradiction of the Soviet system is that of an economy in transition to socialism; i.e., it is a conflict between a non-capitalist mode of production and bourgeois norms of distribution. However, if by non-capitalist is meant socialist, then in the case of the USSR we are not talking about "socialism." As for distribution, we have already seen that the categories such as wages and profit, connected with capitalist norms of distribution, exist only in name but not in the true market sense. If certain residual mercantile categories do survive, they do so with completely new functions.

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The disproportion between the primary and secondary sectors of Soviet industry has often been noticed.[155] A similar phenomenon has occurred in capitalism where the primary sector has grown considerably because of the necessity of continual modernization imposed by competition and technological development.[156] In the capitalist system, however, the "secondary" sector retains an enormous importance. If machines for producing shoes are built, it will sooner or later be necessary to produce shoes. If production in the secondary sector ceases, then there would be no more demand for the goods of the primary sector, and production in the primary sector would be effectively blocked. This explains why a large consumer sector has developed in advanced capitalist countries. The capitalist system, notwithstanding its tendency to relatively compress wages,[157] has developed a series of mechanisms to maintain a high level of consumption. The following three mechanisms should be stressed: (1) the absolute increase of wages as opposed to their relative decrease; (2) the appearance of a very large tertiary sector in which the people who work consume, but do not produce surplus value;[158] and (3) the enormous development of credit (especially installment buying) that has artificially swollen the consumptive capacity of the masses.[159]

The primary sector has also tended to increase in the Soviet system, but it has a rather more artificial character than in the West. Thus, while in the West the growth of the primary sector responds to the organic needs of development (the growing importance of technology and automation necessary for the growth of the secondary sector), in Russia the phenomenon has assumed pathological dimensions that threaten the very foundations of development. Statistics make the point very clear: a century was required for the American capitalist system to increase its primary sector from 18.2% to 55.8% of total industrial production, while in Russia a more impressive jump (from 39.5% to 73.1%) was made in only 33 years.[160] In 1963 about

155. See Kuron and Modzelewsky, *op.cit.*, pp. 68ff; and Bordiga, *L'Economie, op.cit.*, p. 165.

156. On this, see Stanovnik, *I Paesi in Via di Sviluppo nell'Economia Mondiale* (Milan, 1965), p. 49.

157. On this see Mandel, *Marxist Economic Theory*, vol. I, *op.cit.*, p. 144; Baran, "Reflection on Underconsumption," in *The Longer View* (New York, 1969), pp. 189ff; Dobb, *Wages* (London, 1938), pp. 16ff.

158. The phenomenon has already been noted by Hilferding (*Il Capitale Finanziario, op.cit.*, pp. 458ff) and foreseen by Marx in *Theories of Surplus Value*, vol. II (Moscow, 1968), pp. 573ff. C. Wright Mills has analyzed the phenomenon in the USA in his *White Collar* (New York, 1951). See also Sweezy, "Marx and the Proletariat" in *Modern Capitalism and other Essays* (New York, 1972), p. 147, where he points out that white collar workers constitute three-fourths of the American labor force.

159. On this see Sweezy and Huberman, *La Controrivoluzione Globale, op.cit.*, p. 168. The following data give an idea of the extent of demand "artificially" created by credit selling. In 1960 the consumer debt amounted to 193.7 billion dollars and was equal to 46.7% of personal income; in 1968 the corresponding figures were 284.8 billion and 53.9%.

160. See Stanovnik, *op.cit.*

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81% of all industrial resources were destined for the primary sector, and from the period 1959 to 1964 the growth rate of the consumer sector was about 6.6% as opposed to 10.3% for the primary sector, whose starting point was, moreover, much higher. In 1963, for every 14.3 rubles invested in the primary sector there were only 1.9 invested in the secondary sector; the ratio for the 1958-62 period, while somewhat different, still maintained the same frightening inequalities.[161]

Clearly, such a tendency (which, taken to the limit, would shortly reduce the production of consumer goods to zero) is pathological. Although the Soviet system need not realize surplus-value, it is beyond doubt that in the long run, the development of the primary sector must be coordinated with that of the secondary sector. If machines to produce consumer goods are built, sooner or later, they will have to be used to produce those goods, otherwise they will represent a real waste.

Social and political tensions build on economic ones. The Soviet population could bear the sacrifices during the heroic years of Stalinist industrialization when the country was surrounded and threatened. But, by 1950, the situation had changed. Not only had Russia become the world's second economic power, but the defeat of the Nazis and the 1949 Chinese revolution had broken the encirclement. The Russians, furthermore, had made significant scientific breakthroughs. Given this state of affairs, no ruling class can demand indefinite sacrifices from its exploited population. In a delicate and vulnerable organism such as an advanced industrialized society, a repressive system must be dialectically related to reforms and concessions. Otherwise, social tensions become unbearable. Although the previously mentioned "consumer boycotts" caused no market crises, they at least sounded the alarm that marked the threshold of the masses' tolerance.

On various occasions, Soviet leaders have indicated an awareness of the problem. It could be said that, after Stalin's death, the Russian consumers were continually made promises which have been kept only in an irrelevant degree. The production of consumer goods has increased absolutely, but not in relation to the entire industrial production. By the beginning of the 1960s, it became obvious that policies aimed at improving the conditions of the consumer could no longer be postponed. Could this problem be resolved within the framework of bureaucratic collectivism?

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161. For the latest data see Notkin in *Recherches Internationales* 56, *op.cit.*, pp. 59-60. The other data on investments are: 1958, 9.7 against 1.5; 1959, 11.2 against 1.8; 1960, 12.4 against 2; 1961, 13.1 against 1.8; 1962, 13.4 against 1.8. Obviously, such a phenomenon results in an inflationary spiral. Inflation is not exclusive to capitalism and is found in other socio-economic formations: see Kovaliov, *Storia di Roma* (Rome, 1965), pp. 701ff. The determinants of inflation, however, are different in different socio-economic formations. In oligopolistic capitalism it is essentially due to the presence of cartel agreements: see Sylos Labini, *Economie Capitalistiche ed Economie Pianificate* (Bari, 1960), pp. 124ff. In the USSR it is due to the shortage of consumer goods generated by the underdevelopment of the consumer sector.

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Previously, the problem had only been analyzed on the phenomenological level. More recently, Kuron and Modzelewsky have attempted to go further. Their analysis is largely conditioned by the Polish situation to which they explicitly refer. Yet, they outline some clues for a general solution. They write: "Finally, this has to do with a contradiction between the aims of the bureaucratic class—production for the sake of production—and the interests of groups who have an essential function in production, who also tend to maximize their consumption. It is not possible for a central body to decide on everything and it is even more difficult to control and to guide the execution of all the particular directives and all the directional indicators—it is not possible to look at an enterprise from twenty different angles."[162] In other words, it would not be possible to plan everything, since some cracks would inevitably develop in the plan, allowing for the "anarchic" initiatives of the individual managements of enterprises and, consequently, waste and tensions.

Why can't everything be planned? Better yet, why in the past could the plan guarantee a significant economic development without dealing with all the minutest details, while today this no longer seems possible? The working class opposition dating back from the system's very beginning (along with the managers' opposition) asserts itself in the execution but not in the planning phase. They are kept out of the latter since their needs are extraneous to the plan dominated by the interests of the bureaucracy. It is precisely in the conception stage that the plan turns out to be inadequate, despite the fact that it has become as precise as possible. Moreover, between 1928 and 1960, the Russian economy has developed at a fantastic rate. Why, then, can't the secondary sector be increased?

In order to answer these questions, we must structurally determine whether these phenomena are organic or incidental, and whether they will become intolerable for the system or whether they are merely the normal price of development. To understand the problem, we must return to the first Soviet plans. These first plans had a rather linear structure and straightforward goals: to suppress consumption and to develop the primary sector. The success of the plan in stimulating the growth of the productive forces rendered the economy increasingly more complex. The economic structure of a poor, predominantly agricultural country can certainly not be compared to that of an advanced industrial country. Even if the range of products is kept quite narrow, the simple growth of production poses a series of problems relating to adjustment, merging and increasing the complexity of the preceding choices, in the sectors of transport, maintenance, storage and distribution. For example, how are the new factories to relate to the already existing ones? Scientific research and the political-military race with the West poses problems concerning the development of new sectors such as

162. Kuron and Modzelewsky, *op.cit.*, pp. 77-78.

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electronics. In a nutshell, the successes of the plan can only increase the complexity of the economic structure.

It becomes clear that planners have an enormous job calculating and forecasting the direction of the economy. Even with the aid of electronic computers, their problems could not be overcome given the present rate at which the productive forces are developing. Indeed, how many computers would be needed for an economy of the Soviet type? Some Russian scientists have calculated that a million electronic computers, working continually for "quite a few years," at a rate of 30,000 operations per second, would be needed to create a mathematical model that would contain and regulate the 20 million or so reciprocal relations. Even these Soviet scientists admit that this solution is utopian.[163] To further stress the point, we need only realize that in 1968 there were in the United States between 50,000 and 70,000 electronic computers.[164] The data for the USSR is more imprecise, but undoubtedly the USSR lags far behind in this field.[165] If the US, the world's leading industrial nation, with over 20 years of computer experience behind it, is only laboriously approaching the 100,000 computer mark, one can well imagine what the situation is in the USSR which needs several million of these things to solve its problems. There is a simple reason for the computer scarcity: the cost of a machine capable of performing 30,000 operations per second can reach five or six million dollars. This gives an idea of the astronomical costs implied by a planning based on millions of computers.

This is not all. Assuming that the USSR were able to obtain in the next five or ten years, millions of large high-quality computers, it would then be possible to have the kind of bureaucratic planning which would foresee every act that a worker performs and put an end to the enterprises' centrifugal tendencies. To the extent that such a mechanism becomes immensely complex, it would have to work as a mathematical model so large and complex that it cannot be questioned and readjusted every day. Such a system would imply a bureaucratic apparatus of immense dimensions and strength in order to follow every act of every worker, in turn implying an increase in the non-productive costs and therefore waste. Thus, the main dysfunction that computers were supposed to eliminate, re-emerges once more.

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163. On this, see Levi, *op.cit.*, p. 172; Nove, *The Soviet Economy, op.cit.*, pp. 279-80; Grossman, *Economic Systems* (Englewood Cliffs, 1967), pp. 95-96. At the present stage of technological development, however, all the information cannot be determined by computers: see Lusano *Giuscibernetica* (Turin, 1969), p. 156. The data used has been provided by Levi, an expert on economic mathematics and electronic computers. According to him, a system with a million equations would be required to process the data—something "unthinkable" (his exact word). Obviously a more simplified model could be developed, but this would imply a greater autonomy for the enterprises with a consequent unleashing of centrifugal forces.

164. See Prof. Brzezintski's article in *Expresso* of March 22, 1970, which gives these estimates.

165. See Grossman, *op.cit.* Brzezinstki maintains that in the USSR there were (in 1968) between 2,000 and 3,500 computers, not including those used by the armed forces (and therefore excluded from production).

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These oppressive and meticulous controls, reminiscent of Orwell's *1984* would greatly intensify the social and political tensions in what would be the most complex organism of human history. But such a system cannot afford those tensions, which can only be alleviated by integrating the participation of the masses. Could an Orwellian control be instituted in the Russian countryside, for example, where the present plan (which doesn't contain the hundreds of thousands of particularized rules that the "adventurist" plan would imply) already faces fierce opposition? The opposition of subordinate social forces such as farmers, workers and managers which in the initial phase of the system could be tolerated (although it was a source of dysfunction) could become explosive in a system with such an historically unprecedented level of technological complexity.

For these economic, technological, mathematical and socio-political considerations, the whole idea of bureaucratic planning by computers is absurd. It appears that the Soviet Union arrived at a similar conclusion when, in 1965, it recognized the necessity of granting enterprises a broader economic autonomy. The bureaucracy's attempts to maintain the system at a certain level of simplicity were subverted by the very success of economic development. Despite an additional 30-40 or more indices imposed on enterprises before 1965, the number of cracks and dysfunctions increased. New state organs (*sovnarkhozy*—regional economic councils) developed to keep surveillance on the execution of the plan did not reverse or even halt the negative trend.[166]

Thus, the bureaucratic plan can function only in the initial phase of the developing society. Once past this phase, the pre-existing tensions become increasingly more serious and unmanageable while the economy tends to fluctuate and to evade controls. Consequently, the plan becomes an anachronistic straightjacket. Whereas in a capitalist system the development of the primary sector requires a correlated development in the secondary sector, under bureaucratic collectivism we find the absurd situation in which the primary sector tends to develop as an end in itself for, if production grows too much, the plan "blows up." Here there are two main alternatives open: the first calls for a return to the market that would automatically resolve the bureaucracy's problems of calculation and forecasting. The second calls for socialist planning.

The Chinese experience offers an indication of what the second alternative entails. The Chinese model of development has not held back consumption and has given ample space (beginning around 1960) to light industry.[167] Certainly China has a long way to go, but it has begun to confront, with much anticipation and some success, problems that have

166. On the power of the sovnarkhozy, see Mouschely, *op.cit.*, vol. I, pp. 445; and Cafagna, *op.cit.*, pp. 109ff.

167. On this, see Bettelheim and others, *Il socialismo in Cina, op.cit.*, pp. 39ff (which closely examines the role of agriculture and light industry).

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defeated the Russians. On the whole, it has been possible to develop a centralized plan dealing with fundamental choices, while maintaining a large degree of autonomy for the individual enterprises. It is clear that such a system is based on the politicization and direct participation of the masses in the nation's political and economic life. This entails a workers' democracy (mass participation, economic egalitarianism, overcoming the barrier between intellectual and manual labor, etc.) and the integration of the masses in the aims of the plan (i.e., in its content, elaboration, and in the manner in which it is carried out) such that the aims are really collective.[168]

The Chinese model, then, has proved that the bureaucratic road is not always inevitable, even in a poor country. Furthermore, the Soviet model does not always seem to provide the best results for small countries. It is clear, however, that the prevalence of one model over the other will not be a merely abstract, but a socio-political question. The Soviet system obviously excludes the participation of the masses (since it would entail the overthrow of the bureaucracy) so that the class in power must seek to resolve its problems with technological means (e.g., computers). When these technological solutions turn out to be inadequate, the problems in the economy explode with all their severe implications. The masses' and managers' opposition becomes intolerable only within the new economic context. What was previously considered waste or simply a price paid for economic development turns into an insurmountable obstacle.

Thus, the basic contradiction in the Soviet system can be found in the conflict between planned development and the need (unrealizable in this context) to expand production in the secondary sector. Actually, this is the expression of the conflict between relations and forces of production in the bureaucratic collectivist system. Other concomitant dysfunctions of the plan stem from the same source. Yet, they deserve a more extensive analysis to reveal their particular dynamics.

4. The Conflict between the Plan and the Enterprises

Within the framework of the bureaucratic plan, new energetic groups of people are developing their own interests and different ideas as to how the bureaucratic plan should function and how its goals should be realized. They include managers and technocrats, i.e., the economic theoreticians who express at a "scientific level" the managers' interests.[169] This social

168. On this, see Bettelheim and others, *op.cit.*; Macciò, "Partito, Tecnici e Classe Operaia nella Rivoluzione Cinese" in *Giovane Critica* 21, p. 81ff; Sweezy and Huberman, "Understanding the Cultural Revolution," in *Monthly Review* 19:1 (1967); Karol, *Guerrillas in Power* (New York, 1970), pp. 356ff.

169. The conflict between managers and bureaucrats has been stressed in various writings; see, among others, Nettl, *The Soviet Achievement* (London, 1967), p. 253; Antonov, *op.cit.*, pp. 62ff; Scuotto, *op.cit.*, pp. 226-227; Cafagna, *op.cit.*, pp. 107ff; Tatu, *Power in the Kremlin: From Khrushchev's Decline to Collective Leadership* (London, 1968), pp. 437ff; Kuron and Modzelewsky, *op.cit.*, pp. 78ff; Mallet, *op.cit.* A number of writers have

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group grew within the context of a plan that was formulated by others, i.e., the central political bureaucracy. Consequently, its total vision of the economy was functional to the class aims of the bureaucracy. For these reasons, the managers looked upon the plan as something extraneous to their decisions and interests. The directives of the plan were akin to law decrees which managers had to fulfill at all costs or risk social ruin. The result is an antagonistic contradiction between the directives and aims of the bureaucracy and the particular interests of the individual managers who are forced to realize or surpass the norms of the plan—even at the expsense of the whole economy—in order to increase their power and income.[170]

Soviet literature is full of illustrative examples. If the plan decrees the quantity of tractors to be built by weight, what ends up being built are overweight and uneconomical tractors. Similarly, chandeliers, nails, wheels, paper, etc., are heavier than usual; clothes, longer and wider; light bulbs, brighter. When planners seek to remedy this situation by specifying the production of nails numerically, rather than by weight, very small and unserviceable nails are produced. These are only some examples of the excesses which surpass the imposed norm at the expense of the whole economy. The drive toward producing excesses conduces a certain amount of friction between enterprises. This friction, however, has nothing to do with capitalist competition which is specifically involved with profit and the market, but with egoism and rivalry that eventually create the dysfunctions typical only of the Russian economy.

The problem is that an ultra-centralized system cannot plan the particulars of everything—even when the range of products is narrower than in the West. There is always a margin of executive autonomy for the enterprises' managers. Thus, if the plan does not correspond to the real collective interests and is not capable of integrating the individual enterprises into a harmonizing totality (socialist plan), dysfunctions such as the above will occur.

At this point, it could be argued against our thesis concerning the bureaucratic character of ownership and productive relations that business directors do have autonomy—in fact, enough autonomy to injure the economy seriously—the true owners are the managers. The Soviet system, therefore, would be seen as basically a "masked" type of capitalism. Such a counter argument, however, has no grounds for support. The bureaucracy's strength is enormous and allows it to rule the economy even in face of serious dysfunctions and waste. At any rate, dysfunctions, wastes and

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emphasized the more diffuse assertion that Soviet society must liberate itself from the bureaucratic cloak and give more autonomy to the directors of the enterprises. On this, see Levi, *op.cit.*, pp. 168ff; Boffa, *op.cit.*, p. 206ff; Aron, *La Lutte de Classes* (Paris, 1964), pp. 27ff; Antonov, *op.cit.*, pp. 132ff; Nove, *Economic Rationality, op.cit.*, p. 80.

170. The rise of this careerist mentality (a logical development in a hierarchical, authoritarian, and conformist society) was emphasized by Sweezy in the 50s in his book, *The Present as History*.

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centrifugal forces are more or less intrinsic to all antagonistic systems. As for the managers, their behavior is conditioned by the fact that they do not own the productive apparatus and are therefore forced to pursue their own aims by exploiting whatever cracks appear in the bureaucratic plan. In other words, the managers' behavior is that of a subordinate group which, on the one hand, does not have the power to guide the economy but, on the other, is motivated by a desire for more power and the eventual overthrow of existing forces by imposing its own logic rather than the bureaucracy's. Similar struggles obtain in capitalist systems whereby the working class tries to overthrow the relations of forces by inserting dysfunctional elements into the capitalist economy (e.g., strikes and class struggles).

But what is the managers' particular logic? As already indicated, they have positions and interests tied to the success of their enterprise irrespective of adverse effects on the economy as a whole. They would obviously prefer a capitalist market economy, based on the competitive anarchy of several capitals. The managers demands expressed in 1962 with Liberman are not demands for more consumption (as Kuron and Modzelewsky maintain),[171] but for more power, i.e., the expropriation of the bureaucracy and a capitalist restoration. From the bureaucracy's viewpoint, the alternative is simple: it can either continue to produce bad quality products that mask a loss of value—which increases with the growing complexity of the Soviet economy, or restore the market. The latter alternative would undoubtedly resolve a number of problems. The production of too heavy tractors, ridiculously large nails, blinding lights, large clothes, etc., would rapidly fall in the face of market demand. The cost for the bureaucracy, however, is extremely high: the scrapping of the plan, the expropriation of its own power, and the restoration of capitalism.

There is a third alternative that does not imply a return to the market: a socialist plan that integrates the individual productive units within an economic management that includes the interests and effective participation

171. *Op.cit.*, pp. 78ff. Kuron and Modzelewsky, however, point to the existence of a decentralized and technocratic system which they do not regard as capitalism but as the Yugoslav model (*op.cit.*, pp. 55ff). They speak of a "new thermidor." This phenomenon would appear to refer to a bourgeois reaction; but Kuron and Modzelewsky perceive the phenomenon as originating in the involution of the workers' revolution—an idea not unlike that of Trotsky. They stress that "directors' socialism" is a "new" form of exploitation of the proletariat that differs from both the bureaucratic system and capitalism, even though they admit the importance of the market in the latter (*op.cit.*, p. 142). They see the aim of production in this system as rooted in the basic interests of the ruling technocracy, i.e., the consumption of luxury goods (*op.cit.*, pp. 56ff). The Yugoslav model entails a genuine return to capitalism. The aim of the managers is not the consumption of luxury goods, but the production of surplus-value. Luxury consumption merely reflects the social standing of the mangers: it is not the aim of production. In such a "technocratic" (read capitalist) system, the production of luxury goods would be expanded, given the need to find new outlets on the market for the realization of surplus-value. See Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value*, vol. I, where he notes that in capitalism production must be counterposed to consumption for consumption's sake if surplus-value—the main aim of production—is to be absorbed.

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of the workers. The Chinese experience is rather revealing. Because of the widespread active participation of the masses based on egalitarianism, especially with respect to equalizing the difference between intellectual and manual labor, they have managed to avoid Russia's mistakes and to coordinate a strong centralization with a strong rank-and-file initiative.[172]

The recent successes of the Chinese plan, achieved within an historically unstable political climate, are well known. Robinson writes: "...but let any British factory manager ask himself what would happen if his operatives actually *wanted* to increase productivity, without demarcation problems or fear of redundancy, and would freely exchange ideas with his engineers about how it could be done."[173] In capitalism, this is obviously an empty dream; in China, as Robinson noted, it is reality. The free, conscious and integrated participation of the masses in the productive process is the productive force absolutely indispensable for building socialism. The high labor productivity and the good quality of the Chinese products (relative to the level of the economy) is as well known as is the poor quality of the Russian products.[174] In a typically politicized and participatory Chinese factory, it would be rather difficult for a manager to produce oversized or undersized nails, enormous tractors, glaring light bulbs, etc.[175]

5. *An Ineliminable Tension: Low Labor Productivity*

We have already indicated how dysfunctions arise when managers take advantage of the inevitable gaps and imprecision in the plan. A plan that expresses mainly the interests of a narrow bureaucratic class invokes a

172. A vast literature exists concerning the nature of the Chinese experience; see Collotti-Pischel, *La Cina Rivoluzionaria* (Turin, 1968); Snow, *The Other Side of the River* (New York, 1962); Masi, "Linee di Storia del PCC" in *Giovane Critica* 18, pp. 42ff; Roy, *Introduzione alla Cina* (Milan, 1966); Karol, *China: the Other Communism* (New York, 1968); Sylos Labini, *op.cit.*, pp. 204ff; Schikel, *Grande Muraglia, Grande Metodo* (Bari, 1970); Bettelheim, "Due Tipi di Accumulazione," in *Il Manifesto* 5 (1970), pp. 40ff; Karol, *Guerillas in Power, op.cit.* There are also quite a number of articles on the Cultural Revolution. Among them see the two articles by Huberman and Sweezy cited earlier ("The Cultural Revolution in China" and "Understanding the Cultural Revolution"); Salvati, "Rivoluzione Culturale e Partecipazione Politica," in *Classe e Stato* 3, pp. 104ff; Hinton, "Fanshen e la Rivoluzione Culturale Cinese" in *Problemi del Socialismo* 38, pp. 3ff; Nee, *The Cultural Revolution at Peking University* (New York, 1969); Robinson, *The Cultural Revolution in China* (Middlesex, 1969). Also see the fine articles by Lisa Foa-Natoli and Rossana Rossanda in numbers 5, 6, 7-8 of *Il Manifesto*; Daubier, *A History of the Chinese Cultural Revolution* (New York, 1974); Lisa Foa, "Tornando da un Viaggo in Cina," in *Giovane Critica* 25, pp. 52ff. For the period before the taking of power, see Chen, *Mao and the Chinese Revolution* (New York, 1965).

173. Robinson, *op.cit.*, p. 34.

174. On this, see Karol, *op.cit.*; Macciò, *op.cit.*, pp. 90ff where it is noted that after the Great Leap Forward, China moved from an extensive (quantitative) to an intensive (qualitative) vision of economic development. Even earlier, however, the dysfunctions and waste of the bourgeois managers were opposed by mass initiative. Moreover, the Chinese system of distribution pays particular attention to the interests of the consumer (see Bettelheim and others, *op.cit.*, p. 31; Robinson, *op.cit.*, p. 38).

175. On the atmosphere inside the Chinese factories see Huberman and Sweezy, "Understanding the Cultural Revolution," *op.cit.*; Robinson, *op.cit.*, p. 124.

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similar self-centered response from other social groups. This is true not only for managers but also for the working class which has no interest in sacrificing itself on the bureaucracy's altar. The workers' rejection of the system expresses itself through the low level of labor productivity.[176] Although relevant Russian statistics leave much to be desired[177] (for good reasons), what statistics are available show that a problem exists. It is not a mystery that Khrushchev's septennial plan failed in large measure because labor productivity did not reach the projected level. Let us examine this question further to determine whether this phenomenon is organic or incidental.

Productivity embodies two basic elements: first, the quality and quantity of the instruments of production, and secondly, the workers' skill and participation toward production goals. With respect to the first element, we know that for a long time the Russian plan has been based on extensive rather than intensive labor exploitation. The reasons are obvious. The given political and economic circumstances made it difficult for backward Russia to produce certain tools, let alone acquire them from abroad. The strength derived from automation, predicted by Khrushchev's septennial plan, was totally inadequate.[178]

After Stalin's death, the problem of consumerism and reformist politics in relation to the masses was brought up. Such a reformist politics presupposed the development of mass consumption within a framework that could not

176. See Antonov, *op.cit.*, pp. 64 and 120ff, where he cites the case of women workers who had to unload bricks at an absurd pace. In order to realize their quota, they worked quickly breaking many of the bricks. Antonov writes, "By their actions they developed a sense of anger: 'Ah! You don't want a proper kind of work? You want it in a hurry? OK, here are your bricks and we'll throw them to the ground.' " Similar phenomena have been noted in other Eastern European countries. See Sarel, *La Classe Operaia nella Germania Est* (Turin, 1959), pp. 141ff.

177. See D'Angelo and Palladino, *op.cit.*, p. 26, note 14, which cites Nemencinov who notes that even though the statistics are not satisfactory, the productivity of labor is lower in Russia than in other countries. Both Mandel (*Marxist Economic Theory*, vol. II, *op.cit.*, p. 598) and the Soviet economist professor Birman have lamented the excessive use of labor power in Russian industry.

178. See D'Angelo and Palladino, *op.cit.*; the data furnished by these two authors demonstrates the relative technological backwardness of Russian industry. This fact has been missed even by authors like Pollock (*The Economic and Social Consequences of Automation* [Oxford, 1957]). In reality, the technological backwardness was inherited from the Stalin era. From the bureaucracy's perspective the problem can be resolved only by a large investment in the heavy industry sector at the expense of the consumer goods sector. As we have seen, an effort in this direction did occur, but the already low level of mass consumption could not be constricted in an absolute sense. Even at the end of the Stalin era, there was a need to alleviate the tensions resulting from the low consumption level, as witnessed by Stalin's polemic with the "consumerist" Yaroscenko (see Stalin, *Economic Problems, op.cit.*, pp. 45ff). The situation was too explosive; at most the bureaucracy could expand production in the primary sector at a rate relatively faster than in the secondary sector. The enormous obstacles faced by the USSR in its take-off phase—given its original technical backwardness—are documented by the very low rate of amortization of the industrial plants (see Lavigne, *op.cit.*, pp. 216ff). In some cases the duration of a plant is calculated at 43 years. This explains why even after the death of Stalin the rate of increase in investments was greater than that in consumption, during the 1951-59 period.

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support it. On the other hand, a massive technological modernization would have required a further strengthening of the primary sector. It is toward the latter alternative that the bureaucracy leaned., regardless of both Malenkov's and Khrushchev's "consumerist" proclamations. Yet, the delay accumulated *vis-à-vis* the West was enormous and, in order to be overcome, demanded an extended effort with intense mass participation. Moreover, an adequate technological modernization demanded high quality capital goods. Such conditions did not obtain in the USSR where quality is poor and mass participation is difficult to achieve, when the masses are denied power and have low wage and consumption levels.

The two aspects of the labor productivity problem (the objective and the subjective) are therefore closely interrelated. Low quality products lower productivity further. Workers who are scarcely integrated into the productive process feel apathetic toward their work, reinforcing the low quantitative and qualitative character of labor productivity. In spite of the enormous energy poured into the primary sector, the plan, under such conditions, cannot produce sufficient, high quality technical equipment for modernizing the Soviet economy. The problem is even more serious in light of the fact that the Soviet school system (one of the few relatively functional services) by now produces twice as many engineers and 30-40 times the number of technicians than the US.[179] Given the differing cultural and efficiency levels, these statistics are indeed impressive. If in the past the Soviet productivity slump could be attributed to peasant "barbarism," such an explication in the post-Sputnik era misses the target. Low productivity has more profound causes.

The Soviet workers, feeling that the factory does not belong to them, that the aims of the plan are not theirs, adopt a totally indifferent attitude. There is even evidence provided by Soviets to show the workers' alienation in relation to the plan. This workers' rejection combines with managerial decisions. Thus, overly heavy tractors can be produced because the plan establishes the objective in terms of weight, managers can profit if the stipulated weight goal is surpassed, and the proletariat sees no good reason to produce high quality products to enlarge the bureaucracy's fortunes. The workers' attitude expresses not only a demand for more consumption,[180] but also a complete disinterest for the fate of the system. They know that, given the need for labor power, they cannot be dismissed when there is no reserve army to replace them. Denied power, freedom and an acceptable standard of living, they react with the lowest possible rhythm and quality of work.

This state of affairs obviously generates tensions and causes repression. But this repression cannot exceed a certain limit without bursting the

179. See Pollock, *op.cit.*; like Maddinson ("La Realizzazione dell'Economia Sovietica," in *Moneta e Credito* [1965], p. 181), he notes that in 1962 the average level of Soviet instruction was "rather superior" to that of the English system.

180. See Kuron and Modzelewsky, *op.cit.*, pp. 77ff.

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system. In fact, if the Soviet system has not made concessions in the form of wage increases that a developing economy in a market system with full employment would have been forced to make, it has accepted a more moderate work rhythm. Of course, indifferent attitudes and absenteeism also occur in the West in moments of acute social tension. Here, however, the phenomenon is not exceptional but organic and normal, precisely because unemployment threats and wage hikes or consumer methods of integration are not applicable. Furthermore, in 1958, the USSR adopted a shorter work day in comparison to other large industrial nations. Behind this move was a rationale substituting a policy of free time for a policy of higher wages and consumption in order to sustain the good will of the working class.[181] But, to reduce the length of the working day in a historical situation in which productivity increases inadequately resolves or postpones certain problems by creating others. One cannot hope to win the "peaceful co-existence" race by reducing the working day, without frustrating productivity.

In any case, the workers' rejection should not be exaggerated. Whereas managers have a rather precise political objective—the restoration of capitalism—the working class has not yet expressed its objective. This is not to say that the working class is following the managers (although the way it reacts to the system objectively helps the technocrats) but that its present political organizational level is lower than that of the managers. The latter are fewer in number than workers, they have more opportunity to meet and to discuss things, and have been able to reach some consensus on certain fundamental issues, so much so, that by now, they can be said to constitute a shadow-party in Russia. The same cannot be said of the mass of workers who must face great difficulties in organizing politically.

6. The Peasant World.

The history of the Bolsheviks and later, of Soviet power is to a large extent a history revealing rather difficult relations with the peasants in the countryside. Lenin had summarized the Bolshevik politics in a series of

181. A comparison with Japan demonstrates that the USSR is the most austere of all the advanced countries. Recently, Japan's absolute per capita consumption has increased at a rate that is three times faster than that of the USSR (see Levi, *op.cit*); in 1967, Japan had 24 million television sets (second highest in the world) and the use of other electrical applicances was fairly widespread; after 1960 even the consumption of automobiles increased by 30-40% per year (Ballon, *Doing Business in Japan* [Rutland, 1968]). Obviously, Japan has a large consumer goods industry (second largest in the world) as well as a very powerful primary sector. The consumer goods sector produces largely for export, but its presence guarantees one of the necessary (but not sufficient) preconditions for the growth of internal consumption. In the USSR, however, the secondary sector is incurably depressed; it is not possible to stimulate this sector by exporting to the international market. Unlike Japan and other capitalist countries the USSR cannot switch from a politics of austerity to a politics of consumption without exploding the old structures.

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articles in 1913.[182] According to Lenin, the process of capital centralization proceeded in a contradictory manner in the countryside. A myriad of small farms stood next to large capitalist enterprises in which farm owners were forced to work part of the year in the factories in order to survive. This was agrarian capitalism that, on the one hand, exploited the small farmer, on the other, kept him tied to a small piece of land and nurtured his entrepreneurial spirit. The part owner, part proletariat farmer was an untrustworthy ally both sociologically and politically, as was demonstrated by his vulnerability to the Social Revolutionaries' petit-bourgeois propaganda.

Understood as a general scheme, these Leninist theses are somewhat one-sided in light of the Chinese experience[183] (Lenin himself was rather flexible on this point). Nevertheless, it portrays an indisputable reality of pre-revolutionary Russia. Since the Russian workers' movement developed decades after the peasantry's movement, and even then was weak and divided, the former was forced to operate mainly in the cities, among the urban proletariat, leaving the countryside to the Narodniks who already had a solid foothold there. The resulting gap separating the Bolsheviks from the countryside would have required much time and patience to bridge. The NEP and the market (restored after the period of war communism) contributed to a partial reconciliation. Yet, by 1923 the problem of relaunching Soviet industrial development became very urgent.

The Trotskyist opposition proposed the following line. A country surrounded and threatened by invasion must industrialize as rapidly as possible, aided by the exploitation of the agricultural sector and the appropriation of its surplus by the industrial sector (the so-called "primitive socialist accumulation").[184] Preobrazensky's Trotskyist propositions were a little more sophisticated than their vulgar version. Actually, he did not propose the exploitation of agriculture as a whole, but only certain sectors,

182. See the articles on the "agrarian question" in Lenin, *Collected Works, op.cit.*, vol. 19. Similar points were made earlier.

183. The Chinese experience proves how the peasant masses can develop a revolutionary role of the first order; how they need not be mere subordinate and untrustworthy allies of the rural proletariat (which is a "proletariat" in every respect). The same applies to the vast masses of semi-proletarian peasants who are being crushed by the increasing concentration of landed property which in the backward countries adds to the weight of imperialist exploitation. In such a context, the objective interests of the semi-proletarian strata of the peasantry become increasingly more anti-capitalist. To look to the reconstruction of small peasant property would simply be utopian. Perhaps, today the proletarianization of the intermediate strata is much more advanced than in 1913. The Chinese peasants of 1927 were in large measure semi-proletarian (in Lenin's sense). However, a certain strata of the Chinese peasantry rented very small plots of land and it should be noted that they were perceived by the Chinese Communist Party in a manner quite different from that of the Bolsheviks.

184. These were Preobrazensky's theses contained in *The New Economics, op.cit.*; also see Preobrazensky, Bukharin and others, *L'Accumulazione Socialista* (Rome, 1969); Erlich, *The Soviet Industrialization Debate, op.cit.*; Trotsky, *Vers le Capitalisme ou vers le Socialisme?* (Paris, 1928); Rodano, "Dalla Svolta della NEP a Quella della Pianificazione," in *Rivista Trimestrale* 31-32, pp. 636ff and 652ff; Lisa Foa, "Sulle Discussioni Economiche in Urss nel Periodo della NEP," in *Rivista Storica del Socialismo* 29, pp. 164ff.

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i.e., the middle and rich peasants who were monopolizing the surplus.[185]

The Stalinist center, worried about its alliance with Bukharin's pro-peasant right-wing,[186] refrained from adopting the opposition's theses. The left was a threat; any thesis that advocated the necessity of rapid industrialization implying a resurgence of the Trotsky-Zinoviev group could not in any way be accepted. Only after the opposition was dispersed could the Stalinist group assert itself over the weaker Bukharin alternative to launch a rapid industrial growth. It did so, however, in a bureaucratic manner, partly to recoup lost time (the need for industrialization had been clear from 1923-24) and partly to offset the fear of imperialist aggression. Forced collectivization was imposed almost unexpectedly from above without any real mass movement. Previous opportunism turned into bureaucratic subjectivism. The bureaucracy did not stir up the masses—allying peasants and poor workers—since it was not in its interest to do so. It performed a series of tragic abuses which even Stalin had to acknowledge.[187] Engels had once said that peasants had to be convinced, not provoked—something that the Chinese have remembered but the Russians have forgotten. Hence, encounters with the peasantry were often marred by armed conflicts, massacres, and agricultural sabotage (peasants slaughtering animals, etc.).[188] The separation between the Bolshevik power and the countryside, including the poor peasants, became unbridgeable. Whatever "proletarian" spirit resided in the countryside eroded very rapidly when treated bureaucratically.

The situation changed little with the end of the collectivization push. Although the Russian state had to grant the kolkhoz democracy in 1935, this concession was merely a paper formality. Four or five years later, when the kolkhozniks deserted the cooperative enterprises in favor of their private plots, the Stalinist regime stepped in with coercive measures. By the end of the Stalinist period, agriculture was exhausted. Tensions had reached an unbearable level throughout society. Malenkov and Khrushchev reacted by initiating a series of reforms that did not change the form of the state-countryside relationship but rendered it less blatant. (Although prices were

185. From our perspective, if the position of the opposition did not correspond to the Stalinist caricature portrayed by Dobb (*op.cit.*, pp. 191-192), it was vitiated by that jacobinism (and therefore by a masked paternalism) recently noted with much insight by Semprun ("Il Partito e la Rivoluzione," in *Il Manifesto* 5-6 [1969], pp. 47ff).

186. See Bukharin, Preobrazensky, *L'Accumulazione, op.cit.* On page 168, Bukharin states: "Today we must eliminate a series of restrictions on both the well-to-do peasant and the farm-worker who sells his labor power... To all peasants, we need to say: enrich yourselves, accumulate, develop your business."

187. See Stalin, *Problems of Leninism, op.cit.*, pp. 419ff.

188. See Dobb, *op.cit.*, p. 246; Sorlin, *The Soviet People and Their Society from 1917 to the Present* (New York, 1969), pp. 143ff; Ciofi, *op.cit.*, p. 196; on the forced collectivization also see Gaddi, *op.cit.*, pp. 85ff; Mitrany, *Marx against the Peasant* (Chapel Hill, 1951), pp. 70ff; Di Leo, *Operai, op.cit.*, pp. 136ff.

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no longer nominal, as in the Stalinist era, they were far from mercantile, masking only less brutal forms of bureaucratic appropriation).

The pacification policies stretching from 1953 to 1958 were then interrupted by ultracentralization measures that were to last until 1962. They began with the dissolution of the SMT. The countryside reacted immediately. Productivity fell rapidly in spite of the state's ponderous technical and financial investments to develop a chemical fertilizer industry. In line with the general contradictions of the system, the peasants articulated their grievances through technocrats, who in turn saw the peasants as potentially formidable allies in their attempts to restore a "socialist" market. Thus, when Professor Wenjer (the true Liberman of the countryside) interpreted the kolkhoz spirit, he ended up by advocating a complete mercantile autonomy for the kolkhoz. Thirty-five years after collectivization (wrote Wenjer in 1964), the proprietor spirit of the Soviet farmer, trampled by bureaucratic treatment, reemerged in all its seriousness and forced the bureaucracy to make a difficult decision: either a capitalist market in the countryside or a continuation of the silent strike.

7. Revisionist Economic Theories

Economic revisionists have produced an abundance of scientific works. But their positions serve more to obfuscate than to clarify. Thus, it is more useful to examine Brus' writings on the functioning of planned economies as the most organic work.[189] While Brus does not differ substantially from Liberman and his colleagues (or Ota Sik), his ideas are expressed in a clearer, more thorough and more organic manner. Brus, and even more so, Lange[190] whom Brus followed, have played leading roles in this field where Polish and Yugoslav economists have played a leading role.[191]

Brus discusses the contradictions in a socialist economy as non-antagonistic ones. The basic problems, argues Brus, lie in productive choices and prices. They cannot be resolved by a centralized Stalinist plan because a bureaucratic elite separated from the masses will make erroneous decisions

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189. See Brus, *The Market in a Socialist Economy, op.cit.*, and his "Political Economy and the Relationship between Economy and Politics under Socialism," in *The Economics and Politics of Socialism; Collected Essays* (Boston, 1973), pp. 79ff. The theories of the revisionists were diffused in Italy by Pietranera's *Capitalismo ed Economia Politica* (Turin, 1966), pp. 215ff. For an analysis of the various revisionist groups see Wiles, *The Political Economy of Communism* (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 201ff; also note that "socialist-mercantile" categories are defended in Varga's testament (Milan, 1970, p. 87) whose authenticity is a matter of some controversy.

190. For a critique of Lange's revisionism, see Vincent, "Science et Ideologie, un Siècle après le *Capital*" in *En partant du Capital* (Paris, 1968), pp. 281ff.

191. On the Yugoslav model, see Boffito, *Socialismo e Mercato in Yugoslavia* (Turin, 1968), pp. 26ff, where he supports the theory of the restoration of capitalism in Yugoslavia (for a similar perspective see Bettelheim, *La Transition, op.cit.*, pp. 241ff; Plamenic, "The Belgrade Student Insurrection," *New Left Review* 54 [1969], pp. 61ff). Brus' model, criticized here, has been operant since 1965 (with "self management") in Yugoslavia.

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detrimental to the economy. This would seem to imply a call for proletarian democracy. Brus and his Soviet colleagues, however, do not follow this path and, in fact, do not go beyond a superficial demagoguery. The obvious way to resolve the problem for Brus would be through consumer supremacy and enterprises' autonomy. Brus, however, forgets that consumer supremacy can only exist in a workers' democratic socialist regime in which the main choices of production and consumption are collectively reached. Otherwise, there will be a return to a western type of consumer supremacy which is largely influenced by the choices of large monopolies.[192]

The existence of business autonomy in the production sector does not postulate a socialist democracy as much as a capitalist market anarchy and all that it entails. Brus specifically argues that enterprises must be able to choose the type and quantity of goods to be produced, their own suppliers, their production and work rhythm, as well as their own sources of financing. They choose, not according to socialist criteria—the realization of social objectives democratically decided by the collectivity—but according to profit, realized in competition with other enterprises on the market facing the economic risks associated with all this. Profit, competition, failures, unemployment, etc., would be socialism. As for prices, Brus claims that they should not be pre-established for all goods. The prices of consumer goods are to be established by the market while the prices of "socially useful goods" should be set by the plan. Brus' schema clearly delegates primacy to the market rather than to the plan. It is also clear that very few products fall into the category of "socially useful goods." Even the price of capital goods are to be established by the market as a matter of principle. The binding intervention of the plan is thus seen as an exceptional case.

Such an economy, however, is socialist in name only. The objectives of production are not established in a democratic-centralized manner but by autonomous productive units competing on the market for profit. The interaction of these enterprises determines prices, production, distribution of resources, etc. This system lacks any total vision of economic activity performed in order to realize collective aims, unless one were to hold the implausible assumption that a collective goal ultimately, and spontaneously, springs from individual units, each pursuing its own ends. It is useless to argue, in this context, that since property and profits are socialized, capitalism cannot flourish.[193] For Marxists, in fact, ownership is a basic fact which need not necessarily correspond to a judicial-formal definition. In our case, the "socialist" business, dominated by the laws of the market, will objectively be forced to expand production and profits at all costs,

192. See, for example, Packard's famous book, *The Hidden Persuaders* (New York, 1957), where the problem of consumer manipulation is dealt with in a "clamorous" but superficial manner; for a deeper analysis see C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite*, *op.cit.*, pp. 298ff.

193. This seems to be Pietranera's claim (*op.cit.*) as well as that of all the defenders of the "socialist mercantile" system.

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including, above all, depressing wages and increasing productivity. In other words, although such a mercantile-competitive regime may be defined as "socialist," investment and profit are more important than any wage considerations. Production for use-values and human needs (socialism) gives way to production for profit within a competitive market.

This implies an antagonism between the workers' and the enterprises' aims paralleling what can be found in the West. The workers realize that the enterprise is something extraneous and alienating, that it prevents the realization of their needs since it must follow "objective laws." These so-called objective laws entail exploitation, alienation, unemployment, bankruptcy, competition between unemployed workers to sell their labor-power and so on. This kind of system can be considered socialist only at a formal-juridical level, since it obviously lacks the historical content of socialist social relations. A socialist revolution that ends up with ownership relations similar to a capitalist type is not an alluring prospect. Nor are the workers much better off if they reject a bureaucratic exploitation and alienation for a capitalist one. The latter may differ in form and follow different laws, but it sill subordinates workers' labor, their consumption, and their vital needs to interests and principles extraneous to them.

In such a system, the manager representing business interests is akin to the stock-holding member of the board of directors in a Western corporation, notwithstanding the fact that he may have to be accountable to an assembly of self-managed workers as in Yugoslavia. Even if workers have some formal powers, they would be incapable of exercising them since the law of production for profits, embodied in the manager, would dominate them as well. Thus, self-management assemblies would merely ratify their own exploitation and render it less transparent behind a façade of "socialist democracy."

Kardely, the theoretician of Yugoslav self-management, has had to admit the dominating and often crushing influence of managers in the central workers' council.[194] Workers tend to delegate their power (and in this context they could not do otherwise) and limit themselves to merely controlling the operation. Thus, "socialist-mercantile" self-management reproduces divisions between the leaders and followers, mental and manual labour, production for profit, market anarchy, and the commodification of labor-power.

The writings of Soviet reformists generally ignore discussions of workers' self-management. Presumably they seek to realize the mercantile-capitalist schema without even bothering with a formal workers' democracy. One Russian manager previously mentioned, Antonov, for example, talks about

194. See the interview with Kardely in *Autogestion* 8, pp. 3ff, where he states that: "The preponderance of engineers and experts, if not in numbers at least in terms of active participation, in the workers' councils, is a rather widespread and perhaps also dominant fact."

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reinforcing managers' rights, implying that even a façade of workers' democracy is unnecessary.

This is not to say that self-management is an impossible objective but, rather, that it is possible only within the context of democratic centralization. The working class must discuss and make all its necessary decisions toward collective aims. Within this plan, the individual enterprises participate on the basis of collaboration, for socialist goals, toward the production of use-values for social needs. Where this is not the case, where production takes place within a competitive mercantile framework dominated by profit, to speak of self-management is a fraud.[195]

8. Growth Perspectives of Bureaucratic Collectivism

At this point we can specify the perspectives for the development of bureaucratic collectivism. Clearly, such a system cannot develop in rich countries where production is so articulated and complex that it cannot be harnessed by a bureaucratic plan. Undoubtedly, such a system can be superimposed through, e.g., a military invasion—precisely what happened when the Soviet system was transplanted to Eastern Europe. Nevertheless, when such an "external" imposition does not correspond to the existing situation and level of development of the internal productive forces, it rapidly enters into crisis, is artificial and shortlived (even in relation to the duration of bureaucratic collectivist systems which, as we have seen with the Soviet case, quickly enter into crisis).

Bureaucratic collectivism can therefore arise naturally and develop only in underdeveloped countries. This, however, does not mean that a solution of the Russian type is inevitable in poor countries as Kuron and Modzelewsky seem to argue.[196] For a solution of this type to take root, the bureaucratic apparatus must become autonomous from the classes composing civil society. There are historical instances of similar phenomena before 1920 (bonapartism, bismarckism, and the absolute monarchies of the seventeenth century)[197] which never led to bureaucratic collectivism. One

195. Obviously, no one denies that residual mercantile elements must exist during a transitory phase. See "Critique of the Gotha Programme," in Marx, *The First International and After, op.cit.*, p. 339. It is clear, however, that the market categories must, by and large, be subordinated to the plan and function according to the latter's ends. On this see the Sweezy-Bettelheim debate in *On the Transition to Socialism, op.cit.*, where it is shown that, when the plan-market relationship shifts in favor of the market, one cannot talk of a "socialist perspective."

196. *Op.cit.*, pp. 62ff. They point out, among other things, that in Poland the transplant wasn't exogenous (the Red Army) since the system implanted corresponded to the needs of Polish development. This is true, but that does not mean that the transplant was not external and that it did not create an immediate and very profound break between the leadership and the ranks complicated by national considerations. In Poland the process whereby the state apparatus gained a high degree of autonomy was not due to endogenous historical circumstances, but to the imposition of a bureaucratic elite with the help of the Red Army.

197. The Marx-Engels analysis on absolute monarchy has recently been criticized by Althusser in his *Politics and History: Montesquieu, Rousseau, Hegel and Marx* (London,

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reason, among others, was that it was impossible for the state to direct the whole economy on its own in the nineteenth century. A state-controlled economy was seen as a dangerous socialist utopia: people could not imagine an economy without a market. (Such was the force of the spreading bourgeois ideology that by this time was becoming dominant in Europe and in the world.)

Under these circumstances, a bureaucratic collectivist regime could only emerge from the degeneration of a socialist revolution. It can only be the work of a political bureaucracy unaccustomed to traditional bureaucratic patterns and not embued with any reverence for private property. Bureaucratic collectivism can only come about under conditions of a weak local bourgeoisie, incapable of controlling the state apparatus that tends to become autonomous, and a weak exploited class, incapable of presenting a socialist alternative, taking power and thus forestalling the bureaucracy.

Presently, there are strong counter-tendencies impeding the proliferation of bureaucratic regimes. One is rooted in the socializing and conditioning effects of imperialism to which, by now, the national bourgeoisie of poor countries are tied. In fact, imperialism has no interest in the spread of the Russian experience since bureaucratic regimes tend to centralize national resources in order to develop. Thus, they invariably oppose imperialist appropriations.[198] Another counter-tendency derives from the revolutionary movement which has become aware of the possibility of a bureaucratic degeneration. The Cultural Revolution was a first reaction to rising bureaucratic tendencies. Similarly, Amilcar Cabral in Africa attempted to check this phenomenon during the stage of struggle by creating an organic and dialectical rapport between the vanguard and the masses.[199]

The expansion possibilities for the bureaucratic collectivist system would thus seem to be relatively limited. But there is at least one case in which a regime has managed to develop and to solidify itself in a country: Egypt. If we analyze its history between 1952 and 1961, we notice parallels with the Russian experience of 1921-28. At the time of the 1952 coup, civil society

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1972). For an analysis that fully confirms Marx's theory, see Goldmann, *The Hidden God* (London, 1964).

198. The main aim of imperialism is to extract surplus and not to export capital, as Lenin maintained. On this see Jalée, *The Pillage of the Third World* (New York, 1968); *The Third World in World Economy* (New York, 1969); *Imperialism in the Seventies* (New York, 1973); Gunder Frank, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America* (New York, 1967); Hamza Alavi, "Imperialism, Old and New," in *The Socialist Register 1964* (New York, 1964); cf. also Magdoff's *The Age of Imperialism, op.cit.*; and Stavenhagen, *Les Classes Sociales dans les Sociétés Agraires* (Paris, 1970), pp. 12ff.

199. See Chaliand, *Armed Struggle in Africa* (New York, 1969); Davidson, *The Liberation of Guinea* (Harmondsworth, 1969); Albano, "Il Socialismo Africano e l'Ideologia di Amilcar Cabral," in *Giovane Critica* 24 (1970). Similar experiments have happened in Colombia; see Torres, "Social Change and Rural Violence in Colombia," in *Revolutionary Priest: The Complete Writings and Messages of Camilo Torres* (New York, 1971), pp. 188ff.

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was in ruins: the bourgeoisie was weak, corrupt, discredited; the proletariat was equally weak and for the most part disorganized. The only healthy and efficient sector of the state apparatus—the military bureaucracy—seized power and was forced by the internal logic of the situation, i.e., the pressing need for development,[200] to make increasingly frequent intrusions into the relations of production by expropriating the corrupt and inept bourgeoisie.

The process culminated in 1960-61 with the laws of nationalization which literally destroyed whatever remained of the large and medium bourgeoisie. The extractive and transforming industries, transportation, banks, insurance companies, foreign trade and a good part of the distribution[201] was taken over by the state. Only artisan shops and small businesses remained private because they were marginal sectors with small mercantile production. Land, however, was generally organized into vast cooperatives that were more or less rigidly controlled by the state—in a way resembling the Russian kolkhoz.[202] Some old capitalist property remained until 1966 when it began to be liquidated—although in a contradictory manner.[203] In essence, the economy is dominated by the state with remnants of little importance or concentration left in private hands. It is not accidental, then, that one faces the same problem in dealing with the Egyptian system as with the Soviet system (managerial society, state capitalism, bureaucratic collectivism)[204] and it is also not accidental that Egypt should have experienced economic dysfunctions similar to those of the Soviet system.

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200. On this point, see the very good work of Anouar Abdel-Malek, *Egypt Military Society* (New York, 1968), pp. 161ff.

201. After these laws, the public-private sector relationship was overturned. Malek writes (*op.cit.*, p. 174): "But there can be no doubt that this sector [the private sector—A. Carlo] in a way provided a source of contribution to the public sector and that it was hardly possible, even theoretically, to talk of equality between the two sectors."

202. On this, see Sarel, "Revolution par le Haut dans les Campagnes Egyptiennes," in *Les Temps Modernes* 274, pp. 1772-1794. On page 1797 we read: "Two types of productive relations became predominant towards the middle of the 1960s in the Egyptian countryside: the capitalist and feudal type of large property; and the bureaucratic type within the cooperative framework which, transformed, tended to develop a combination of the two types of relations."

203. Sarel, *op.cit.*, p. 1798. That this tendency develops in a bureaucratic direction is not doubted by Sarel. On page 1801 we read: "The road that Egypt has chosen to modernize itself approaches very closely that of the popular democracies: statization of the industries, measures tending toward collectivization in the countryside, formations favoring these policies, and formations of a planning bureaucracy united into one party. The coexistence of capitalism and bureaucratic collectivism in the countryside is nothing exceptional; popular democracies in their beginnings offered the same picture."

204. Samir Amin (quoted by Malek on page 369) talks of state capitalism (in the Bordigan sense) as does Hussein in *Class Conflict in Egypt 1945-1967* (New York, 1974), pp. 184ff; Rodinson, *Israel and the Arabs* (New York, 1968), p. 98, speaks of Egypt as a country with a "centralized statist economy controlled by the military caste;" Sarel (*op.cit.*) speaks of bureaucratic collectivism but suffers from Wittfogel's influence (see *op.cit*, p. 1774, note 2) and speaks at some points of hydraulic societies (p. 1880); finally, others speak of "managerialism" (see Malek, *op.cit.*, p. 177).

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9. Conclusions

As we have seen, then, under the crust of an apparently monolithic structure, Russian society is torn apart by enormous contradictions and ponderous forces pushing toward the restoration of capitalism. This does not mean that between 1960 and 1965 (the years during which the crisis became evident) the plan operated in an illusory manner. Likewise, in capitalist societies, the presence of contradictions and forces pushing toward socialism certainly does not mean that socialism is a working reality. The Russian bureaucracy has established a system that denies the laws of the market but, being an antagonistic system, develops tensions and contradictions that can be overcome in only two ways: either by moving towards socialism or by restoring capitalism (which would then obviously regenerate the contradictions of capitalism).

The history of the Soviet Union proceeds through various phases: (1) the phase of the revolution and the civil war (1917-20) during which the imperialist encirclement began; (2) the bureaucratization phase (1920-28) in which the party based itself on the state (in fact became its leader) and became autonomous from the masses; (3) the phase of bureaucratic collectivism (1928-65) during which the bureaucracy appropriated the productive apparatus and became a class; (4) the phase of the restoration of capitalism which began with the 1965 reforms and is now in progress.

We have outlined a schema or model (based on the Soviet economy) which is also applicable to other countries (Eastern Europe). In so doing, we have followed the example of Marx, who studied capitalism at its highest point (in nineteenth century England) since it is from the highest level of development that the basic characteristics of a certain type of economy can be obtained. Just as there are anomalous and exceptional capitalist forms, there are also differing bureaucratic collectivist forms. In this theory, the central element to consider is the prevalence of the bureaucratic and centralized plan over mercantile categories. Even the economic laws that we elucidated (the disproportion between the primary and secondary sectors, the growing waste of resources, the low productivity of labor) were revealed as tendential laws realized through oscillations, extenuations and occasional modifications.

As for China, we have often counterposed the Chinese experience to the Russian one and, undoubtedly, China today expresses the highest level of revolutionary practice. We must, however, make clear that the Chinese experience is complex and contains serious contradictions that could bring about, if not positively resolved, a regression toward the Russian model—a danger which the Chinese are the first to admit.

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III.
The 1965-1966 Reforms: Where is the USSR Going?

1. Industrial Reforms from 1956 to 1965

We have seen that serious tensions have developed in the USSR which are not resolvable within the system and which entail either a socialist or a capitalist solution. Kuron's and Modzelewsky's "technocratic" alternative is no real alternative since their "socialism" (i.e., an economy directed by managers) based on the Yugoslav model is nothing but capitalism, since the laws that regulate it are substantially those of the capitalist system. What is typical of capitalism is the production for profit. This is true even if the system lacks some relevant legal charcteristics such as the hereditary transfer of ownership of the means of production (something that has not yet been restored in Yugoslavia).[205]

The capitalist solution, which is the one preferred by the bureaucrats, would destroy the bureaucracy as the dominant class. Yet, to the bureaucracy, this solution appears the lesser evil since in a capitalist society they would survive as a (relatively) privileged caste at the service of the dominant class.

Moreover, it is always possible for the bureaucrats to go over to the victors' side, as happened with certain feudal lords during the ascent of the bourgeoisie, and thus preserve their privileges that a socialist solution would destroy. This is reinforced by the fact that in both the bureaucracy and in the technocracy there are a series of uncertain and fluctuating elements (e.g., managers who were party functionaries) such as Kosygin.[206] These elements objectively seek compromises (a reflection of their hybrid social position) and occasionally succeed: the 1965-66 reforms can be seen as a compromise very much along these lines. These compromises cannot freeze history. Yet, they break open a fixed situation thus opening the way for overcoming the very compromises.

The year 1965 marks the maturation of the contradictions and the fractures of the bureaucratic plan. From 1956 to 1965 the Soviet economy was an experimental laboratory seeking to eliminate its internal fractures. After 1961 (the year that signalled the first important setback of the Soviet economy as a whole)[207] polemics were added to the experiments which this

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205. In Eastern Europe (including Russia and Yugoslavia) the right of inheritance is generally recognized outside of the sphere of the means of production. Mandel has even talked about the survival of the "bourgeois right of inheritance" in his *Marxist Economic Theory*, *op.cit.*, vol. II. But this is not correct. Inheritance rights are also found in feudal and slave societies.

206. It has been pointed out that Kosygin has in the past taken pro-reformist positions (see Levi, *op.cit.*, pp. 512ff). During the Prague developments, the government newspaper (run by Kosygin) took a more moderate attitude than *Pravda* (the party paper).

207. In 1961, in fact, industrial development was only 4% (see Pervukin in *Recherches*, 56, *op.cit.*, p. 16).

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time did not tend to modernize the system but, rather, to modify it in the Yugoslav direction. The problem began in 1956, when workers were no longer required to work for the enterprise to which they were assigned. This reintroduced the phenomenon of labor mobility. In 1957 Khrushchev's decentralization reforms gave some important powers to newly constructed peripheral organs, the sovnarkhozy, which nominated and recalled top managers of enterprises. The centralized ministries that had controlled the economic activity of the various branches were largely abolished. This was seen as a return of the law of value as the leading element of the economy. But such a law can only operate in small mercantile production and in capitalism but not within a planned economy. Capitalism certainly was not restored in Russia in 1957. Enterprises remained fully subordinated to the plan: at the beginning of 1965 the plan still specified 30 or 40 binding rules for enterprises.

Moreover, the reform did not restore the profit principle, which is necessary for the working of the law of value in a capitalist-mercantile system. In fact, in 1962 Liberman and the company fought to have profits admitted as the guiding element of Soviet enterprises. The meaning of the 1957 reforms is something else: to expand the base of bureaucratic power and to better control individual enterprises. Like the old centralized ministries, the sovnarkhozy (the principal innovation of the reform) were still organs of the Soviet state. Their main duty was to make sure that the plan (always decided by various state organs) was followed, and to nominate and recall the mangers of enterprises.[208] This is considerable power, but it did not touch the central and dominant character of the plan; it brought controls closer to the managers through organs that, although peripheral, were always state-bureaucratic. Thus, the bureaucracy's lower strata were given prestige and their commitment to the system strengthened.[209] It was not by accident that the reform came after 1956, when high-level bureaucrats had to face the problem of the size of their own base.

In 1958, pseudo-democratic organs were created in the factories for obvious propaganda aims, and in 1961, there was a formal recognition of the right of management in the enterprises. This right, however, had no real content since the plan remained dominant. It was therefore necessary for those seeking autonomy for the enterprises to come out into the open and formulate their explicit demands. In 1962 there was a partial recentralization (above all a reduction in the number of sovnarkhozy) in response to economic problems.[210] 1962, however, is also the year of the "Liberman debate."

After 1960 the obviously evident failure of the seven-year plan and the masses' dissatisfaction permitted the "autonomists" to come into the open

208. See Nove, *op.cit.*, pp. 67ff, and Mouskely, *op.cit.*, vol. I, pp. 457ff.
209. See D'Angelo and Palladino, *op.cit.*
210. See Miller, *The Rise of the Russian Consumer* (London, 1965), pp. 24-25.

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(1962) with Liberman's famous article, whose demands sought to develop plan-market relations openly in favor of the market: business autonomy, profit, self-financing, material incentives, and price flexibility (largely influenced by the market).[211] The direction of the proposed reforms is clear: they follow Brus' scheme. The profit principle signals a complete reversal with respect to the old plan where profits were a mere bookkeeping device. It was neither a measure of an enterprise's success nor a function of distribution nor did products necessarily have to be sold on the market. Hitherto, the plan and not profit had been the mainspring of the economy: the enterprise had to realize the plan (even at a loss), and if there was a surplus product, it went to the economy in its entirety except for a small part that remained with the enterprise (the so-called director's fund). All of this was done through the mediation of the plan and not the market. The basic principle was that, what was good for the plan was good for the enterprise. Liberman reversed the principle: what was good for the enterprise would also be good for the plan—collective utility was to be realized through competition. Thus, after 35 years of Stalinist planning, there was to be a return to Adam Smith.[212]

It is not altogether unlikely that, in the future, there could be a complete restoration of private property on the legal-formal level. But even if this does not happen, the implicit and explicit applications of the Liberman model would bring about a type of economy in which each business would act according to capitalist principles and managers would have the power of management and disposition of the goods and profits of the business similar to their western colleagues. Among other things, managers would be able to take part of the profits as "remuneration," thus enriching their private estate.[213] This would be enough to turn the Soviet economy into one based on surplus value and on the exploitation of human labor to the advantage of

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211. Liberman and others, *Piano e Profitto nell'Economia Sovietica* (Rome, 1965). Liberman's themes were subsequently taken up by other economists such as Trapezukov, Nemencinov, Birman, etc.

212. Liberman's attempt at defense (for internal or external use?) contained in a letter to *The Economist* (*Piano e Profitto, op.cit.*, pp. 161ff) is interesting in that the Soviet economist notes that profit cannot be obtained by a single enterprise and thus private capitals could not be formed. This, however, is false since in the first article Liberman speaks about the gains, incentives, and the freedom of the enterprise to dispose of the incentive fund (capitalized profits); see pp. 22-23.

In substance, the enterprise acts according to the profit motive; it no longer aims at producing use-values, but rather exchange-values for the market in order to make profits, a large part of which will go to the enterprise provided with a lot of commercial autonomy. Thus, the logic of an economy that operates for profit and for exchange-values will begin to work itself out and in the long run, it will determine the predominance of the market over the plan. This is obviously not explicitly stated by Liberman but it is clearly implied.

213. Obviously, these "remunerations" can very well mask profits in the technical sense (an expression of surplus-value and not surplus-product) that the managers give themselves through a proper manipulation of the budget. In this regard, Soviet managers can take a lesson from Western managers. Their lapses show that they would be very good pupils.

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a class (the managers) who would practically live on this exploitation. On the whole, such a system would not substantially differ from capitalism. The only difference is that each manager, on dying, would leave the enterprise to another manager rather than to descendants. This, however, does not in the least affect the productive relations and its functioning.

In 1964, after two years of discussion, the Liberman reforms were tried out (seemingly with success) in two establishments, and in 1965, after the failure of the seven-year plan, a series of reforms proposed by Kosygin were passed. They moved closer to Liberman's direction and therefore, were politically different from those of 1957 which were inspired by principles of administrative decentralization.[214] It would be exaggerating to see in these reforms an integral restoration of capitalism, as happened in Yugoslavia. In spite of everything, the plan remains at the center of the economy. The reform, however, openly recognizes some market principles whose coexistence with the plan is unstable and contradictory. Although the reformers have not won the war, they have won a major battle.

Let us examine the main points of the reform: the rules imposed by the plan on industry were reduced from 30 or 40 (and sometimes even more) to 8. They control the basic goods to be produced, capital investment of new plants to be built, production to be sold, the main tasks of new equipment, the technical-material supply, the level of profits and of income, which payments are to be made by enterprises to the state budget and vice-versa, and the total wage fund.[215]

Prices remain generally fixed through the plan.[216] An economy so controlled cannot be considered capitalist since the principle of production for profit, if it occurs, is largely subordinated to the plan. Only when the market supplants the plan will profit really become the leading element of the economy and one could therefore speak of capitalism.

Yet, the reforms remain significant since the managers are given considerable power concerning the number of employees, the work rhythm, and the internal distribution of wages (the plan sets only the basic total wage

214. Power is not partly transferred to peripheral state organs (the 1957 sovnarkhozy) but to the productive units, i.e., the managers. On the 1965 reforms, see *Le Riforme Economiche nei Paesi dell'Est* (Florence, 1966).

215. See Levi, *op.cit.*, pp. 515ff; on the reforms, see also Lisa Foa, "Pianificazione Centrale e Decentramento nella Gestione Economica in Urss," in *Problemi del Socialismo* 3; her "Il Carattere Socialista delle Riforme in Urss," in *Critica Marxista* 5-6 (1965); Ciofi, "Riforme Economiche," in *Critica Marxista* 1 (1967); and his *L'Edificazione*, *op.cit.* It should also be noted that the state does not give capital freely, but asks for interest from enterprises (see Levi, *op.cit.*, p. 519). Even after the reforms, however, the state's power is enormous and leaves no doubt as to who is the boss. Interest, therefore, does not imply that the enterprise is now independent from the state. In the past, in fact, the free assignment of funds was a source of waste on the part of managers; thus, the state resorts to the mercantile category of interest to contain this waste and to make individual directors responsible for "their" enterprises. Even the state agricultural sovnarkhozy now pay interest (see Gaddi, *op.cit.*, p. 283; Levi, *op.cit.*, p. 566).

216. See Gusarov, "Il Prezzo è uno Strumento del Piano," in *Bollettino dell'Ambasciata Sovietica* 48 (1969), pp. 21ff.

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fund). Moreover, this gives rise to the labor market since the managers are no longer faced with restrictions regarding employment policies and in 1956 labor mobility became possible once again—all of which gives rise to unemployment (managers now set up work rhythm and, of course, they tend to employ more "productive" workers, laying off others) which makes this tendency fairly important.[217] Self-financing was also allowed, and, finally, products had to be sold, while before they had only to be produced. Thus, exchange assumes greater importance.

Dobb claims that there has been no qualitative change from the Stalinist era concerning incentives.[218] In the Stalin period, however, incentives were tied to the realization of a plan whose objective had a global and centralized character; now they are connected to the utility of the enterprise. Thus, we have a futher push towards production for egotistic business ends. Yet, as long as the state controls the macroeconomic levers (investments, wages, production, prices, etc.) there is no predominance of the market over the plan, and the profit principle remains subordinated to the plan. Clearly, however, if in order to make profits it will be necessary to depress the wage fund (by laying off some less productive workers and taking on more efficient ones), a conflict will develop with the plan which establishes the wage fund. The same would happen for goods produced for what the plan specifics as the "commercial composition"—or at least for the fundamental categories: even if it is more convenient to produce other goods, it will be necessary to obey the plan. The same is true for new equipment specified by the plan and for prices which no business autonomy can change (e.g., through cartel agreements reached in order to increase prices and profits). Here, the functioning of market mechanisms and production for profit is clearly subordinated to and hindered by the plan. The profit principle demands, if not the destruction of the plan, its subordination to the market. Thus, the Kosygin reforms open a period of instability and social tensions: they shift already existing tensions to a qualitatively different level.

217. Levi mentions that in 1967 committees for the employment of labor were set up (*op.cit.*, p. 537). Symptomatic is the news of the Schenekino (a chemical factory in Tula province) lay-off of 870 workers when it increased the wages (and the work rhythm) of the others. This situation was cited by the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party as an example to be followed (see *Quaderni Ceses* (1969), pp. 1814ff which reprints the resolution "of praise" of the Central Committee).

Obviously, Soviet propaganda says that the 870 laid-off workers were reabsorbed. Recently, however, a rather authoritative Soviet magazine let it slip out that "almost" all of the workers were reabsorbed (see *Quaderni Ceses* [1970], pp. 248-253ff) and that the workers expelled from the productive cycle met "a series of difficulties" that slowed down their re-employment. This is important: in the past the USSR was characterized by a type of unemployment where the workers would leave their place of work and look for a better job certain that they would be taken on because of labor scarcity. This type of unemployment showed a need for, and not an excess of, labor. Now, however, workers find it hard to be reabsorbed: unemployment tends to be structural. With the embryonic development of capitalist mechanisms, the delights of capitalism also reappear.

218. Dobb's theory is summarized by Lisa Foa. Cf. "Il carattere," *op.cit.*, p. 283.

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2. The 1965-1967 Agricultural Reforms

Stalin's death came at a time when the relations with the masses demanded a revision since tensions were becoming unbearable. Timid decentralizing "advances" up to 1955 were followed, after 1958, by measures in the opposite direction. The dissolution of the MTS (centralized organ) was only apparently a liberal measure since the MTS personnel were "trustworthy" state employees to be organically inserted into the kolkhoz. In reality, the measure tended to bring state control closer to the enterprise. At best, it was ambivalent.

These strange zig-zags in state-rural relations can be explained by the fact that the individualistic peasants interpreted each decentralizing concession too broadly, which necessitated the stiffening of the state and the continued see-saw. 1958-1962 centralizing measures, however, brought on the "strike" of the countryside. Thus, in the 1965-67 period, the state had to bend the stick back the other way and give peasants some concessions similar to other industrial reforms. The first reform "package" was essentially social in character (e.g., it improved kolkhoz pensions). The only change of importance for us was a modification of the acquisition price from the countryside.[219] Although it did not establish free market prices, it did meet in part the desire of peasants to reduce (and, in perspective, to eliminate) the difference between the state prices and free, or kolkhoz market, prices. The intensification of the "mercantile" tendencies became clearer in the second phase of the Brezhnev reforms (1966-67) when it was decided on an experimental basis, to run 390 sovkhozs (completely statized enterprises) according to the profit principle (as with post-reform industry), and that part of the profits could be re-used for self-financing. Thus, the number of indices was reduced, and the number of employees was no longer fixed by the plan (although the total wage fund, as in industry, did remain fixed). Furthermore, some kolkhoz were allowed to experiment with zemstvos, where the cultivation of a part of the land would be entrusted to some families, who would also keep a large part of its product, presumably to be sold on the free kolkhoz market.

Clearly, this is still quite far away from the privatization of agriculture, as formulated by Prof. Wenjer (who talks of "socialist" mercantile production). As with industry, here the principle of mercantile profit is subordinated to the plan. Even if less advanced than in industry, here too we discern a distinct tendency for centrally directed bureaucratic-collective relations to rapidly degenerate.

3. USSR Reforms: Preliminary Evaluations and Perspectives

Initial results of the Brezhnev-Kosygin reforms were positive: they freed some productive forces. The 1966 increase in agricultural prices and the

219. See Levi, *op.cit.*, pp. 501ff.

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rather timid beginning of a movement toward privatization provided some incentive to increase production. In industry, the acceptance of some of the managers' demands furthered the realization of the plan by partially relaxing their silent sabotage. Reforms provided the managers with the type of rationalization that they wanted. By maneuvering between the carrot of incentives and the stick of lay-offs (which is no longer an illusory threat), they got the point across to the workers. The managers could lay-off three "lazy" workers and take on two "good" ones by using the incentive of higher wages, given that they were now free to expand or restrict the number of employees.

In 1968, however, the old tensions reemerged in all their severity. The 1965-67 reforms and the connected plan were only emergency measures which did not resolve structural problems. Thus, the old problem of productivity remains, and Soviet productivity is only about 70-80% of Italy's.[220] The growing importance of the secondary sector poses the major problem of articulating production. As already indicated, this problem cannot be resolved within the framework of a system still relatively dominated by a central plan: it necessitates further shifts in the direction of a total "mercantilization" of the economy.

Thus, the new consumer orientation must be reconsidered since, although a significant absolute increase in consumer production is foreseen for 1970, light industry still remains the poor cousin. In 1970 production in the primary sector is projected at 250 billion rubles against only 100 in the secondary sector. The primary sector should increase 51% (with respect to 1965) while the secondary only 45%. If Baibakov is correct, however, in 1969 sector A was developed at a rate of 6.1% per year against 6.8% for sector B. Thus, we would have the first very timid beginnings of the inversion of the direction. The difference, however, remains enormous, and the predominance of sector A is obvious. What is relevant is that even this modest inversion was possible only by beginning to dismantle the old system and moving in a capitalist direction.

Moreover, the "consumerist" orientation objectively retards the developing of a solution to the problem of technological modernization of Soviet production. The latter, in fact, requires a strong effort in the primary sector. Such an effort today is impossible since it would create unbearable social tensions. Thus, it was decided to increase consumer production, thereby leaving the productive apparatus in a state of retardation which will hinder the development of labor productivity. Whichever solution is chosen, it can only deal with the immediate situation. In the long run, the problem remains. It could be partially resolved by intensifying trade with the West, buying what Russia has difficulty in producing.

220. See Chapter II, note 70 and Cacace, "Produttività ed Organizzazione del Lavoro in Urss," in *Problemi del Socialismo* 49, pp. 838-845.

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It is interesting to notice some tendencies in Soviet foreign trade. In the past, this was never too important to the Russian economy. There is clearly a tendency to increase trade with the West: in 1950 this trade was 19% of total Soviet trade; in 1960 it was 28%; from 1961 to 1967 the percentage of trade with the West in the balance of payments of Eastern countries reached 38%.[221] After 1965 the consumerist turn increased this tendency, and two events assume a great importance: agreements with Fiat and Japanese businesses, and the development of a merchant marine.[222]

The laws of the capitalist market, however, demand conformity from those who operate within it.[223] As long as trade with the West was insignificant, there were no great problems. But as this trade increases and, presumably, becomes more necessary, it is easy to imagine how the conditioning of world markets would compound the pull of internal mercantile economic principles. The increase in trade is still modest. This is explained by the continued poor quality of Russian products that fail to attract western buyers, and by the fact that Russia needs its raw materials and cannot greatly expand this type of export. In time, however, the situation will deteriorate, thus allowing the "liberals" to make additional demands.

The recent Liberman-Sitnin debate (Sitnin being a conservative) concerning prices clarifies a lot: Liberman wants prices to be decided by the market which, as the scandalized Sitnin notes, would mean a return to capitalist anarchy.[224] For the market to decide prices it is necessary to have western criteria, i.e., the logic of capitalism. What this means is that the technocracy has not renounced its idea of transferring economic power from the plan to the enterprises. This implies the expropriation of the bureaucracy by the technocracy. In the present system prices are a tool of the plan and operate independently of the market mechanisms. To wrestle this from the bureaucracy would practically amount to taking away from it the control of the economy.

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221. Jalée, *Imperialism in the Seventies, op.cit.*, pp. 168ff.

222. See Celoni, *La Russia sul Mare* (Bari, 1968), pp. 140ff. This phenomenon already existed in 1945, but in the last years in particular (in the reformist and pre-reformist era) it has become much more important with the large orders at the Polish and Japanese docks. On the recent agreements with Japanese businesses see also Jalée, *Imperialism in the Seventies, op.cit.*, p. 174, which refers to other important business agreements between the USSR and large western monopolies. On the Fiat matter see also Scuotto, *op.cit.*, pp. 278ff.

223. See for example Marx, *Grundrisse, op.cit.*, p. 408, where he writes: "The tendency to create the *world market* is directly given in the concept of capital itself. Every limit appears as a barrier to be overcome. Initially, to subjugate every moment of production itself to exchange and to suspend the production of direct use-values not entering into exchange, i.e., precisely to posit production based on capital in place of earlier modes of production which appear primitive (*naturwüchsig*) from its standpoint. Commerce no longer appears here as a function taking place between independent productions for the exchange of their excess, but rather as essentially all-embracing presupposition and moment of production itself." See also Preobrazensky, *The New Economics, op.cit.*, p. 232.

224. See Levi, *op.cit.*, p. 570.

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To use a military comparison: the Russian plan still occupies the dominant heights of the economy, but it is completely surrounded by stronger market mechanisms. This state of affairs is not a result of the market mechanisms being dominant, but, rather, a consequence of the plan's inability to resolve the problems of the Russian economy. The situation is further complicated by the countryside's continual strikes after the brief 1966 relaxation.

According to the Soviet agency Novosti, the plan sets up the pace in the countryside. The "mercantilization" tendencies of 1965-66, although real, were considered too weak and they failed to reestablish the predominance of the market over the plan as the Russian peasants wished. Was there poor mechanization of agriculture? Without doubt, but it would be too easy to reduce a political problem to a technological one. The labor productivity in the kolkhoz plots proves that work can be done effectively (with respect to productivity in collectivized enterprises) even without a huge technical apparatus. If the farmers gave the kolkhoz the same attention that they gave to their own plots, Russian agricultural production would not have increased only 28% in 8 years.[225] Thus, even the countryside continues to reject the present Soviet productive system.

After 1968, Russian agriculture deteriorated. In addition to climatic problems, the basic dysfunctions remained. If we take into account these years' experiments and continued adjustments meant to cure the "great sickness" of the Russian economy, and the modest base from which it took off in 1960, we have a totally distressing picture. The brief state-countryside "flirtation" of 1966, helped along by the euphoria created by the modest 1965-66 reforms, had already worn out by 1967, and it is now a far-away memory.

The problems are now all in the open and we cannot see how the bureaucracy can resolve them. Whatever road Soviet society takes (restoration of capitalism or socialist revolution), the bureaucracy as a class is due to go.

4. A General Proof: Czechoslovakia

Before drawing definite conclusions, we cannot avoid examining the decay of bureaucratic collective regimes in Eastern Europe: e.g., the Czech developments. Clearly, the decaying process in question is not only hitting Russia, but also East European countries where the Soviet system was transplanted by the Red Army, with Yugoslavia being the only exception. The foreign installation of a bureaucratic collectivist system and the consequent political and economic vassalage (Comecon) of the local bureaucracy to Moscow explains the extreme fragility of these regimes, even with respect to

225. For this data, see the Novosti article in *Bollettino dell'Ambasciata Sovietica* 31 (1969), p. 21; on the difficulties of the plan in agriculture in 1967, see Scuotto, *op.cit.*, p. 276.

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the Soviet model, a separation from the masses even greater than in Russia, and their vulnerability to nationalist propaganda.[226] Moreover, unlike Russia, most of these countries do not have the enormous reserve of raw material and workers on whose extensive exploitation Russian economic development has been based.

Of these countries Czechoslovakia is the least adaptable to a bureaucratic collectivist system since it was already an industrialized and "westernized" country. Undoubtedly, war destruction contributed to the earlier development of a plan adapted to the needs of economic recovery (a war-devastated industrialized country presents recovery problems somewhat similar to those of underdeveloped countries).[227] The huge political strength of the Czech Communist Party (which controlled about 40% of the electorate) allowed the solution to be less "foreign" here than in Poland or Romania, by temporarily giving the regime a mass base. This mass base permitted the system to come out of the 1956 tempest unharmed. But when the crisis did come, it was more serious than in Hungary and Poland.

In these still underdeveloped countries the system had its margin of survival, even after the 1956 crisis. Since, however, Czechoslovakia was a modern and industrialized country, the crisis expressed a situation where the development of productive forces entered into incurable conflict with the maintenance of bureaucratic collectivist relations. In other words, the 1956 crises in Poland and Hungary were largely due to conjunctural factors (for example, the enormous ferment generated by Khrushchev's report in the two countries where the regimes were most authoritarian and disliked by the masses).[228] In Czechoslovakia, however, the main determinant was the complete decay of the bureaucratic plan. For example, during the 1958-63 period the fall in the rate of income increase is generally greater in Czechoslovakia than in the USSR. In 1963, income was 2.2% lower than in 1962, which in turn was only 1.4% higher than in 1961.[229]

In fact, the middle of 1960s reforms had an explicitly mercantile character and were a response to the plan's increasingly unbearable dysfunctions (waste, poor quality goods, low labor productivity, and little development of consumer goods). Lacking a proletarian revolutionary response, direction could only pass over to Ota Sik and the supporters of "market socialism."[230] The need to reinforce the economic reforms, which

226. On this, see Kuron and Modzelewsky, *op.cit.*, p. 68.

227. On this, see Selucky, "L'Economia Cecoslovacca tra Ieri e Domani," in *Praga 1968, op.cit.*, pp. 245ff. This author (a pro-reformist) notes that with the end of reconstruction in 1953 the Bohemian economy let loose some reserves which it allowed to develop until 1958 when the implications started to catch up with the reality and were to explode some years later, first with a series of reforms, and then with the new course and Soviet occupation. In effect, the contradictions of the system surfaced after only a dozen years (much sooner than in Russia).

228. On the 1956 crisis, See Kuron and Modzelewsky, *op.cit.*, p. 96.

229. See Karol, *Guerillas in Power, op.cit.*, p. 319, note 30.

230. See Selucky, *op.cit.*, pp. 253-254, where we read: "It is not by accident that the whole history of humanity up until today confirms that the basis of civil society is the market economy

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were being sabotaged by the bureaucracy, mandated the January "revolution" and the fall of the Novotny regime. Nothing further opposed itself to the realization of a human socialism (i.e., the socialism of a man who goes to the market!).[231]

The Russian intervention must be understood in this framework: it sought to crush in Prague forces similar to those in Moscow. They hit Sik because they understood Liberman. This can be seen more clearly if one takes into account that just at this time an offensive was unleashed by the bureaucracy to block the gradual application of the reforms—with some immediate successes.[232]

5. The Social Forces Involved

In such a complex situation, it is not appropriate to prophesize. Yet, historical materialism must allow some probable scientific forecasts. The restoration of capitalism is not a linear process but a dialectical one led by two main social forces: the bureaucracy and the managers.[233] We have already discussed the class nature of the bureaucracy. The managers also fit the concept of class-for-itself in the Marxist sense. This social group has its own interests within productive relations and they tend towards the restoration of capitalism. The struggles and polemics of these last years also show that they are aware of this fact. They do not have their own party but

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that excludes the violent, i.e., anti-economic, constraint of working people [sic] towards output; this renders it impossible for the basis of human relations to become hierarchical within the context of the entire state. As soon as the market mechanism is weakened and eliminated there necessarily comes into economic life subjectivism, administrative methods, bureaucratic maneuvering, and authoritarian decision-making procedures; for the criterion of disinterested [sic] measurement which is the market, artificially established indicators must be substituted..." This revealing passage shows the ideological exaltation of the market as the basis of every civil society, without any class analysis of this "neutral" instrument that underlies production. On Sik's theories (of which this passage is the "reality") see Sik, "Interview," in *Rinascita*, November 28, 1964, pp. 11ff, and Ota Sik, *La Verità sull'Economia Cecoslovacca* (Milan, 1969), pp. 125ff.

231. See Kadlec, "Garantire Economicamente il Socialismo," in *Praga 1968, op.cit.*, p. 289 where he points to bureaucratic sabotage that evidently necessitated political action.

232. On the new course and the 1968 events, see *Praga 1968, op.cit.*; Bonsignori, *L'Utopia Bruciata* (Milan, 1968); Neri, L'Esperienza Cecoslovacca," in *Quaderni Piacentini* 36, pp. 21ff; Baldelli, "Il Nuovo Corso Cecoslovacco e l'Intervento Sovietico," in *Nuovo Impegno* 12-13, pp. 29ff; Tilgrid, *Praga Agosto 1968*) Milan, 1969); Macciò, "La Cecoslovacchia e la Strategia Sovietica," in *Giovane Critica* 19, pp. 46ff; Sweezy, "Czechoslovakia, Capitalism and Socialism," in *Monthly Review* 20:5 (1968), pp. 5ff; Huberman, "A Disaster," *Monthly Review, ibid.*, pp. 1ff; Page, "Ota Sik and Czechoslovakian Socialism," in *Monthly Review*, 21:5 (1969), pp. 36ff; Bartdosek, "La Nostra Crisi Attuale," in *Il Manifesto* 5-6 (1969), pp. 51ff; *L'Homme et la Société* 9, pp. 7-131 with articles by Klein, Kosík, Richta, Teige, etc., on Czechoslovakia; Klein, "Quelques Données Théoriques du Renouveau Tchécoslovaque," in *L'Homme et la Société* 20, pp. 65ff.

233. In this we differ from the Chinese who do not distinguish between these two groups. Tatu, *op.cit.*, maintains that not all managers are reformists. Even if this were true, it is beyond question that this vanguard responds to the objective interests of the group that has shown considerable ability to press their demands. Certainly, there are ambiguous, centrist and uncertain elements, but this is normal in social struggles.

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by and large belong to the Communist Party of the USSR (many of them, in fact, have a political background). Thus, it is not hazardous to consider them a current in the party, from which they won some concessions in 1965. They are also organized around "liberal" economic and literary journals.

Let us now look at those forces that the two contenders must consider:

A) *The bureaucratic-military apparatus.* Although some members of the "liberal" wing of the military hold interesting positions, there is no doubt that, on the whole, the higher levels of the army are part of the party-state bureaucracy of which they constitute a sector. The military bureaucracy's interests do not coincide with the managers'. In fact, the politics of consumption and of easing of tensions forced a temporary reduction in military spending and, therefore, of the generals' political importance. The position taken by the army's journal *Red Star* in the cultural debate among the youth is clear: it followed a traditional Stalinism that certainly could not favorably consider the managers' ideas.[234] The Czech invasion could not have been pulled off so smoothly without the support of the high military bureaucracy—and we have seen socially what the invasion implied. Finally, without the support of the army (i.e., its highest levels), the bureaucracy would have been destroyed some time ago, isolated as it is from the rest of the country.

B) *The world of peasants.* As we have seen, they seek the restoration of capitalism.

C) *Intellectuals and students.* This group is divided into various currents: some are neo-Stalinists (Sciolokov and Kocetov), others seem to be Leninists (or Trotskyists?), and finally there are others (the largest group) who are "liberals" and express on the cultural level the same demands that managers express on the political level. This latter group has succeeded in gaining the sympathy of most students. One need only look at the attitude of the Czech youth (which is related to their Russian contemporaries) towards Dubcek, whom they considered to be utopian because of his internationalism and his anti-mercantilism. In addition, in spite of police repression, in the last years there has been a proliferation of clandestine university youth journals expressing decadent and petit-bourgeois positions.[235]

Many of these people probably believe that they are socialists and hope, in Russia as in Czechoslovakia, to reconcile socialism, the market, and bourgeois individualism. This is an understandable reaction to the economic and human failure of bureaucratic collectivism which is often identified by intellectuals as a form of partial and distorted socialism. Moreover, even in the West, "Marxist" intellectuals have in good faith identified Yugoslavia as the "correct" synthesis of socialism, the market, and individualism, given the

234. On the attitude of *Red Star,* see Levi, *op.cit.*, p. 621.

235. See *Antologia di Riviste Clandestine dell'Urss* (Milan, 1966), p. 102 in particular, where we find a depressing (and very bourgeois) poem of a certain Mr. N. Nor.

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failure of the Soviet model. The attitude of Yugoslav youth, however, was quite different when in 1968 they entered into an unprecedented revolt. But this can be partly explained by the fact that in Yugoslavia the process of transition towards capitalism began earlier and was generally completed by 1965 (with the last economic reforms). Thus, it is no accident that the youth of Belgrade and Zagreb took on the "new red bourgeoisie,"[236] nor that the youth of Prague took on Novotny and the old bureaucracy which in Russia had its equivalent in Brezhnev, etc. In Prague, reforms were in their initial phase and could be realized only minimally because of the bureaucracy's opposition to their execution (even when they were formally passed). In Belgrade the restoration of capitalism was accomplished and one could see the "positive" results of the reforms (unemployment, strikes, growing social inequality, the persistence of cultural authoritarianism, etc.).

D. *The working class.* This force is the largest unknown in the situation and, in the end, is the decisive force because of its numerical, economic and cultural importance. The Soviet workers have no reason for remaining faithful to a bureaucratic system that has given them low wages, no democracy, bureaucratic unions, and very low quality consumer goods. The very low labor productivity is largely due to their alienation from the system. It does not follow, however, that the working class is on the managers' side. If the 1965 reforms initially raised any hopes, they soon showed their true social significance when they were fully carried out (although their realization was hindered by the bureaucracy). The power to distribute incentive funds was given to managers and to the discredited union committees, with the result that they took the lion's share while the workers ended up with the crumbs.[237]

Moreover, the broad powers given to managers have recreated the specter of unemployment and have given the managers a black-mail weapon with which to increase the work rhythm. If the youth, intellectuals, and the groups extraneous to the relations of production can still have illusions about the reforms, this is not true for the Russian workers who have the reforms worked out on their backs and who know the real class nature of the "New Economics." The most probable attitude of the working class will be one of neutrality—at least if there is no rapid revolutionary development on a world scale.

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236. On the youth revolt and its nature see Plamenic, *op.cit.*; Kralj, "Le Semaine Rouge à Belgrade," in *Partisans* 44, pp. 63ff; Del Boca, *Rapporto dalla Jugoslavia* (Genoa, 1968), pp. 136ff; Perlman, "Naissance d'un Mouvement Révolutionnaire en Jugoslavie," in *L'Homme et la Société* 16, p. 267ff.

237. See the data cited by Levi, *op.cit.*, p. 536 where, on the basis of Russian statistics, he notes that only 15% of the incentive funds went to workers (who are very many) as opposed to 48% that went to managers (who are very few). The fears of those who thought that the reforms would open the road to profits (see Colletti, "Il Metodo Liberman," *op.cit.*, and Lisa Foa, "Il Carattere," *op.cit.*, p. 283) were confirmed.

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*The Political Nature of Epistemological Categories: Introduction to Bloch**

by Burghart Schmidt

The following article by Ernst Bloch is a chapter from *Experimentum Mundi*, a work still being written. This book sets forth the major categorical features of the World Experiment. Because of the context in which this work stands and in which it can only be understood, an introduction is required. These remarks will deal mainly with the meaning of the 'categorical' in Bloch's philosophy, since the peculiar sense of the term can be discovered only through a study of his collected works. The fact that the historical character of the past inheres in the categorical and decisively determines it will bring philosophy to a self-understanding which will preclude a relapse into Hegelianism.

In many interpretations, categories, whether seen as forms of thought or as modes of existence, are merely congealed, moulded expressions of the contemporary, historical reality from which they stem. Under the presupposition that the generative principle for categories has a purely social character, the categorical is restricted to a reflection of momentary social relations. Thus, the category of Identity in logic would reflect nothing more than exchange based on money. However, since their historical course of development, social relations are constantly dissolved in revolutionary ways, the categories of the interpretation in question must just as constantly become invalid and can be of help only in reconstructing the historical process. In no way can they mediate actual Praxis. This is actually the Hegelian doctrine that the only thing to be learned from history is that nothing can be learned from history—indeed, a radical solution to the problem of what the present inherits from the past. However, Marx has already specifically pointed out that a revolutionary overthrow does not make everything new, but anchors a new society on elements constructed in the prior period. The future must be seen, therefore, entirely in reference to the past, only not to the closed form of the past, but rather to its burst open form. Since, moreover, the real economic process coheres in and with all revolutionary leaps [*Sprüngen*], the early Marx even speaks in *The German Ideology* of a relative justification of the idealist method (today, one must speak of the methods of the social sciences), which at times trace current features of the cultural superstructure to elements in prior superstructures. But since the cultural superstructure reflects the relations of production, and since these relations stand in a historical, process-like nexus, this nexus must also be valid for the reflection of this structure found in the human mind. What is false is the assertion that the preceding culture

* English translation by George Ellard.

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and cognitive procedures in and of themselves had constituted the latter, i.e., a transfer of cause-effect relationships to the history of ideas. Here it is mainly a question of the dependence of the categories on their temporal socio-historical position. The tendency to exaggerate their historical dependence must be guarded against. This tendency asserts that each social form with its determined production relations constructs out of itself an entirely specific categorical context.

Ernst Bloch sees this tendency as the basic problem of a doctrine of categories. A natural consequence of this tendency is that the plurality of doctrines of categories can only generally provide information about their relation to their origin; a doctrine of categories would itself be impossible. However, the still unanswered question concerns what Marx later wrote in the introduction to the *Critique of Political Economy* concerning the historical nexus of categories and their self-developing invariability and lasting validity: "The bourgeois society is the most highly developed and the most highly differentiated historical organization of production. The categories which serve as the expression of its conditions and the comprehension of its own organization enable it at the same time to gain an insight into the organization and the conditions of production which had prevailed under all the past forms of society, on the ruins and constituent elements of which it has arisen, and of which it still drags along some unsurmounted remnants, while what had formerly been mere intimation has now developed to complete significance."[1]

Thus, a doctrine of categories is possible and necessary because the categories transform themselves historically according to the economic basis and are caused by it. Moreover, the categories sustain an invariability in an unchanged Function-as-Content condition which suppresses a self-modified description of modified forms and modes of existence. How are we to understand this invariability? Under the assumption that categories as forms of thought are an intellectual [*geistige*] reflex of social relations, it would be true that essential, basic structures of reality, such as the Master-Slave relationship, have maintained themselves unchanged. To use another example, it would even be true that Identity is a valid axiom of thought as long as exchange determines the relations of men to one another. In this way, categories would remain a supplementary reflex, whose function is exhausted in the affirmation of the circumstances which produce them. But exactly in this function, in the relationship of the categories to reality, lies an unsolved problematic of Marxism which Engels had seen, but which he shunted provisionally along the track of a one-sided solution. He emphasizes, of course, that he and Marx had for the time concentrated on the derivation of cultural forms of perception from production because they had

1. Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, translated by W.I. Stone (Chicago, 1904), p. 300.

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to show the main principle of the materialist interpretation of history. In later investigations he overlooked the question of what type of reciprocal effect the intellectual modes of perception had on the production and reproduction of actual life. He summarized this effect hypothetically as a mere affirmative justification of the existing order.[2] According to such an interpretation, the invariability as well as the change of categories reduces to an ideologist the critic who understands them merely as bounds, as what resists the process insofar as the critique fails to represent the categories in terms of a merely historical overview of the congealment of forms and modes of Being.

In contrast, the utopian philosophy of Ernst Bloch proceeds from the idea that the function of real, reflected categories is not limited to a justification of existing conditions. Categorical formations can transcend what is reflected by them and can grasp the disparate goals of what is not yet. Bloch carries this out in the same way in which Marx expresses historical experience: the categories of later, more advanced social conditions develop the anticipating signs of that which came before. Categories make it possible to represent, therefore, anticipating signs, or paradoxically expressed, the structures and forms of the being of a not-yet being in ways which are, of course, ideologically concealed. All categories of such a being and even their nexus are changeable. This is where their power not to be merely a justification is found. They are not completely cut off nor are they completely joined to the process out of which they are constructed and in which they work. They go beyond this process, which makes it possible to be valid in a changed content and functionality. Otherwise, each epoch and social form would have its own doctrine of categories, divorced from that which came before and that which comes after. History would not be a process, but a mosaic-like unity of an unconnected succession. Rather, its categories stand in an historical-materialist nexus; thus, they are not pure functions ot thought, but are centered, real reflections, which embody the tendency of reality to aim toward future conditions. They become progressive, leading and organizing the process.

The invariability of the categories is their demanding promise which persists unviolated; their changing forms are attempts at possible constitutions of reality. This stands, of course, in contrast to the distorted view which conjoins the utopian progressive character of categories with that other characteristic which distorts a justification of ends. Bloch's fundamental demand is for "categories without ideology." The principle criterion for satisfying this demand is an openness in the categories. They should be like a model. This is not to be confused with the positivistic trial and error because this character locates itself in the historical process-nexus, rejects an isolation and reification of facts, and emphasizes the subjective response

2. Cf. his letter to Bloch, dated September 1890, and to Mehring, dated July 1893.

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against conditions found in every attempt to realize them. Thus categories remain in an open nexus with one another, which Bloch describes with the paradoxes of open systems. The basis for this paradox is that a systematic nexus would not be disavowed simply because the system always appears closed, as in Hegel's circle of circles which supercedes Becoming, process, future and possibility. Just as Engels separated the Hegelian philosophy from its reactionary consequences by differentiating between its method and its system, so is it here a question of saving some aspects through differentiation in systematic thought. Bloch emphasizes the origin of a closed system, its hierarchical sub- and super-ordination, its hard, unchangeable structure stemming from static, dormant classes, especially those of a class society.

Yet, a nexus is not necessarily static; a lasting order of thoughts and things also partakes in a revolutionary development which liberates the momentary subsistence through negation and passes over to new forms and orders through experiment. *Experimentum Mundi* attempts to represent the categorical groundwork of an open system which rejects the static character of a closed system in favor of the process-like character of reality. This differentiation in the concept of a system indicates immediately how a distinction between utopian progressiveness and ideological resistance through categories is to be understood. The same distinction must be maintained in both main groups of categories, the reality nexus and the forms constructed out of that nexus. The reality nexus, the transmission of reality, exposes the illusion of a law-like character independent of the subjective. It is not that the creative discretion of the subject makes everything possible at all times, but it is related to conditions which offer a plan for intervention. The form exposes the illusion of a placid, pre-planned essence which orders complete, composite ideas as archetypes accessible only to inspection and intuition. These ideas are the products of a process which is not an undifferentiable stream; they contain the process and thus do not come to a final rest, but pass beyond this as something not yet carried out. They draw themselves out. They are not static and are not to be understood as archetypes. This completes the sketch of Bloch's intention to emphasize subjective factors and production in the course of history as the World Experiment. It represents the nexus from which the discussion of *telos* and *causa* proceeds.

The categorical builds itself as Transmission in the forms of process-like conditions or, in Engels' terms, the categorical builds the mode of existence (in contrast to the form of existence). In *Experimentum Mundi* an entirely new look is thrown on reality. Material causes and conditions are related to the subjective impetus toward further, more significant, determinations of goals. If the old teleology was nothing more than a theological prop to maintain the careful foresight of God for men, for Bloch man's final determination of the world in terms of matter's still undeveloped possibilities is treated in a wholly different way. The world as given is not ordered in terms

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of purpose. It must be so constructed through human work; this does not take place in a smooth nexus, but occurs through leaps, interruptions, disturbing and helpful accidents, but above all, it is based on the impending danger that our actions are in vain.

The archetypical character of the category, as changing while maintaining itself, is made especially clear, therefore, in the material nexus of determination by an end, of something being directed toward a goal. Bloch clarifies this point with a concept from Wundt's *The Heterogeny of Ends*. He maintains that in realizing goal oriented activity, the process itself can transform the intended goal. Since this reciprocal relation is situated in an openness which is constantly probing and testing, the reciprocation can contribute to better, more positive results as well as to lack of success. Process-like archetypes are not complete. They need, therefore, a guiding and controlling subject. The necessary limitation of a principle of ends can be found in respect to the influence of the process of realization. The material in which and with which the goals should be realized is not just a mere pliable wax, as Bloch has already shown with respect to Aristotelian material possibility in *Prinzip Hoffnung*. Nor is it something merely resistant which makes work difficult for the subject as it must be seen, for instance, in Sorel's historical process as a restraint or limitation on action.[3]

The category of Finality is strongly linked with the category of causality. Every carrying out of a goal is strongly linked with a cause which makes it possible. But these causes are not to be understood as governed by laws of the natural sciences which produce an effect with exceptionless necessity or which admit in any case an uncertainty factor of statistical probability. These causes refer to the intervening setting of a goal without which the goals could not be realized. But that does not mean that the conditions produce from themselves the effect which first becomes possible through a supervening setting of a goal. The structure of the mediation of Finality and Causality is determined through human work in that this work is what primarily forms both categories. Marx describes work in *Capital* as a procedure starting with a plan in the mind, a pre-setting of a goal, which organizes the material conditions of raw material and tools into a process of realization. It activates causes for the realization of ends which, without this interference, would produce other effects.[4] Basing the category of finality on human work presupposes the mediation of work with causality.

Lukács has also seen in this relationship the only suitable interpretation of the problem of Teleology. Only through this approach can the notion of *telos* be protected from the traditional teleology of theology which wants to show the existence of an architect in the structure of the world. Lukács, however, for the sake of an ideology critique, exaggerated the relationship

3. Cf. Ernst Bloch, *Philosophische Aufsätze* (Frankfurt am Main, 1969), p. 342.
4. Cf. Marx-Engels *Werke*, vol. 23, p. 193.

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between *causa* and *telos* in favor of the objective, mediating *causa* and to the disadvantage of the interfering active *telos*. The result is that ends are reduced to causes. They are reduced historically and in terms of their nature to human drives and needs. The setting of ends becomes a fleeting, regressive moment as in the necessity of causality in which for the sake of the dialectic the self-validating, subjective factor is called Freedom; this factor is shunted aside and caught in the necessity of objective mediation. Lukács emphasizes how correct Hegel is when he places man-made tools above human ends: the conditions of human work above any momentary goal. In the tool, manifold, particular ends are represented generally. Lukács writes in agreement: "Thus, Hegel can correctly say that the tool, the means stands higher than desire or impulse for the satisfaction of a need." And just as strongly does he agree with Lenin's commentary: "The tool preserves itself while the unmediated enjoyment perishes and is forgotten. Through his tools, man possesses a power over external Nature even though he is through his ends subjected to Nature." And further in his commentary on Lenin: "Actually human ends are produced by and presuppose the objective world; they find this world as the given, as that which is at hand. But his goals appear to man as stemming from outside the world, as being independent of the world (Freedom)."[5]

Here, for Bloch, the freedom of the subjective factor is not an indifferent moment of movement which is allowed to disappear, but is rather a meaning to be worked out of the course of historical revolution. Thus, he links the setting of ends with the causality of existing conditions, but the factor of finality surpasses the conditions of its mode of realization. The means are present for the sake of the goal, not the reverse. Tools, themselves, and the productivity of human labor would be senseless were it not a question of the surplus produced with their help. In connection with this distant goal, tools can, of course, become provisional conditions of goals. The production of definite conditions is subservient to definite ends.

On account of the primacy of goal-positing Freedom in the human subject, Bloch can also win an entirely new appreciation of the accidental. An accident, first of all arising merely out of the crossing of two causal chains, appears because this crossing is wholly mediated by necessity, but in such a way that it expresses the interruption of the necessary nexus in terms of an indeterministic collision. In such a way, that other characteristic of the accidental comes to light. The accidental is not chaos or arbitrariness, but is something which makes the unconditioned noticeable in what is thoroughly conditioned. It is something which through the relatively free operation of the human subject becomes changeable and decidable. If everything is necessarily determined by grounds as a narrow concept of causality demands, then corresponding to this narrowness is a limited conception and

5. Georg Lukács, *Der junge Hegel* (Frankfurt am Main, 1967), pp. 432ff.

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constitution of future possibility. What is possible is what is merely not actual: future events are already determined materially as well as formally by the present state of history. Or even in terms of a Kantian transcendental: the possible merely means that the perceiving subject has achieved no categorical knowledge; consequently, the possible is the methodological hypothetical.[6]

In order for the possible to have a new content as well as a new form, the thoroughly causal determination must be broken and breakable. If the opposite of complete necessity is the accident, then the accidental is the presupposition of the possible, of freedom, as well as of the positing of goals. However, an anarchistic principle of the accidental may not be inferred, as in William James, even if this allows the preservation of unlimited possibility. Bloch deals with this double aspect in James' Pragmatism elsewhere.[7] The accidental is merely an interruption of causality; its implementation progressing to a goal remains bound to causal [*kausal*] conditions and motor impulses [*Ursachen*]. The indeterminacy in causality means an open texture as changeability. A too progressive, more inclusive, concept of causality confines this open texture to conditions of suspension of objective, real possibility and represents the presupposition for the realization of the Final in human labor in such a way that, in the last analysis, history simply pushes forward. This is the historical-systematic meaning of accident in Bloch's philosophy. He distinguishes between the broad causality of conditions (open texture) and the narrow causality of causes (closed necessity).

Lukács, following Hegel's example, downgrades the accidental to single transitions of the historical process, to a great collection of individual facts and suffering which constitutes the individual form of the facts and suffering. The unaccidental particular of historical development is realized through the scattered individual. This development is not merely the determination of the future by the past. It is seen as necessity. Necessity is not restricted to mechanism, but can also appear in dialectical progressions of the positing thesis, the contradictory antithesis, and the superseding synthesis. To be sure, Lukács sees the antirevolutionary danger in the Hegelian history of philosophy and even compares this exaggeration with the opportunism of the Second International which wanted to succeed entirely without a revolutionary subject. His solution, however, is wrong.

It differentiates between the individual and his historical role; it purports to be a discharging of historical necessity, a victory over the Hegelian standpoint, according to which all individual accidents collapse into a single, external necessity. In referring to Hegel's remarks on Napoleon, Lukács says that the moving force in the passion of an individual is that aspect of the

6. Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Frankfurt am Main, 1956), pp. 267f.
7. Cf. *Philosophische Aufsätze, op.cit.*, pp. 60-65.

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person belonging to the realm of the contingent. Yet, through his individual action, this person can fulfill the historically necessary role. Thus, what is contingent and underivable is that this particular individual exercises this necessary function and not another. But this tells us nothing about a historical necessity which governs everything contingent, which glosses over it and indifferently shunts it to the side.[8] The subjective factor of freedom serves only a general and objective rising intimation of history, even if it is transferred from the individual to a class subject. This class subject is ultimately mediated by the individual. Thus, there is nothing left for Lukács in regard to freedom but to repeat the praise Engels heaped on Hegel: Freedom is insight into necessity, and necessity is blind only insofar as it is not comprehended.[9]

For Lukács, there is a human *telos*, which he must recognize in the basic structure of work as a mere mediacy and not a discontinuous leap [*Sprung*]. The contingent is minimally important as the possibility of subjective intervention. The different evaluation of the relationship between mediation and leap constitutes the essential, antipodal difference between Lukács and Bloch in the politically important Expressionism debate, and expresses itself along the same problematic exhibited in the problem of teleology.[10]

Bloch's advocacy of the primacy of finality gives value to the political decision of the subjective factor. The subject must interfere with conditions which have become ripe in order to make change effective and goal-directed. This view, which stems from epistemology and a philosophy of history, rejects reformism, which believes in the possibility of constructing these same relationships through goal-oriented, but instrumental activity, without locating the revolutionary subject in the movement. It also rejects that doctrine which claims that socialization of the means of production in a transitional stage of state and society can take place in such a way that antagonistic contradictions are solved through non-antagonistic contradictions. Implied in this is that the class struggle and a necessary, prognostic, ordered development of socialism to communism determines the course of the more distant history. This view rejects the subjective factor in a goal-conscious revolution. Both of these objectivist doctrines are objectionable because the non-static needs and decisions of the subject, enlightened by a critically tested, positive Finality, can halt the course of the process of change and set it right.

The form and content of finality is, of course, related to conditioning tendencies and to causality. In order for intervention directed toward an end to be possible, this causality must be construed other than as a necessity without exception. Only a discontinuous, interruptable and consequently a

8. Lukács, *Der junge Hegel, op.cit.*, pp. 444 and 448.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 439.
10. Cf. *Die Expressionismusdebatte* (Frankfurt am Main, 1973), pp. 278ff, 184, and 187ff.

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causality capable of change and characterized by a state of suspension, a causality which does not immediately transform itself into an effect, can admit human work. Causality finds itself reaching beyond its own limitations. This indicates the primacy of finality in causality. End and goal are not merely categories of an historical process made by men. Such an interpretation would thoroughly wrench history and nature apart from one another. Nature would then be merely the raw material which is taken up as the non-participating other in the process of history. Lukács restricts *telos* entirely to the human work process. Nature is said to be as foreign to *telos* as it is to everything human because in Nature no subject appears. Thus, of his later book on the young Hegel, he returns to an earlier position which exposed *History and Class Consciousness* to strong attacks, although this position was presented only in a footnote. The polemical objection of the communist theoreticians had forced Lukács to retract his standpoint and the entire book by which he wished to be represented.

It is a question of denying the dialectic of Nature on the grounds that Dialectic presupposes a Subject-Object relationship which is not to be found in Nature. The same argument appears in a different posing of the question: Finality cannot inhere in Nature because Nature lacks a Subject. In contrast Bloch maintains that in human history no fundamental categories must appear, at least not in Nature. This refers to the problem of the real constitution of categories as forms and modes of existence: the overall relationship of the categorical seen as a function of thought to a logic in Nature. In this way the general relations and forms exist in a tension between the categorizing subject and the categorized object. This is, of course, not in the manner of objective Idealism for which general concepts constitute the essence of the material object. The amenability of the material world to reason is, in contrast to this Idealism, expressed in the medium of human understanding. There is no analogy between the categories grasped by the knowing subject and the constitution of matter. A disposition toward categorical formation inheres in the material in much the same manner as a disposition toward creative activity inheres in the human production process. The act of labor would be otherwise reduced to the material. Matter must contain, therefore, the disposition for goal-setting labor. Only in this way can the possibility of goal-directed activity be seen as the real constitution of matter and, therefore, of Nature. Only in this way can this possibility be seen as the germinating goal for a germinating subject, as the grid for the mediation of subject-object in the work process which, in the last analysis, makes history.

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*Causality and Finality as Active, Objectifying Categories (Categories of Transmission)**

by Ernst Bloch

That which expresses itself externally, always precedes itself. One action always nudges another. This is the particular human activity which permits men to think in causal terms. This activity reveals to man the temporal succession of events as causally connected. But that which is temporally prior is not in every case thought of as a Why for that which comes later. Nor is that which is temporally later always seen as an effect of the earlier. So it is with the day following the night and the night, the day. The day is never thought of as the cause of the night, although it regularly precedes the latter. Nor can that which is later be seen validly as an effect of that which is earlier, even though there is nothing which is temporally more regular than the night following the day and the day, the night. Even here, it is man's own activity, and above all else work, which can be validly thought of in causal terms. Take, for instance, the turning on of a light whose consequence is its becoming bright. So here an incorrect inference is prevented, but this is not at all the case with many other before-and-after series, in which the ability of work to reveal a causal connection is forgotten. This is especially true in those cases in which the impulse is temporally very distant or is spatially hidden. A confusion of the ground of knowledge and the ground of the events, themselves, can also lead to incorrect causal inferences, since that which is the ground of knowledge and that which is the ground of the event are often not identical. A rising column of mercury in a thermometer, for instance, signifies that the mercury is becoming warmer, but it does not cause the warmth. Just the reverse is the case. The warmth of the air causes the expansion of the column. Shadows on the moon signify that there are mountains there, but the mountains are not caused by the shadows. Again the reverse is true: the mountains cause the shadows. The great difference between the ground of knowledge and the ground of the event was made known only amazingly late by Crusius in 1743, but the principle has since then been obvious. Valid instances of causation are connected in ways which are not as certain, but which, nonetheless, are not uncertain. These series run straight and unbroken, but they do not remain alone in or with themselves.

None of these series remains merely causally related with itself alone. In respect to the where-to (*Wohin*) and what-for (*Wozu*), it is always a question

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* This article, published for the first time in any language, is part of a new book by Bloch to appear in German shortly. English translation by George Ellard.

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of reciprocal action. The effect turns back on the cause, changing the cause itself. This is not something additional, but rather something to be effected and is itself from the outset causal. This character, which is peculiar to purposeful activity, must appear to a purely mechanical theory as an intrusion of that which comes later, as if some sort of striving-for has to be taken into account. This striving-for is in some cases already organic, but it correctly appears for the first time in all more or less conscious, social desires. The appropriately posited cause acts, moreover, as a means to an end, and the action appears not as a random happening, but rather as something successful or, in the case of an unfulfilled goal, as something unsuccessful. Both the successful and the unsuccessful are determinations, which are missing in a merely mechanical operation, but which are, however, implicit in the final analysis. Of course, mistakes can also be made, anthropomorphic insertions of a hasty or even a completely reflexive sort, but this at least does not lead the human-organic, means-ends series to error. Even the reproach, the critical suspicion of anthropomorphism, which is justified in all particular cases, does not assume that a relationship to an end is operative in all human work. But this anthropomorphism does not decide the whole issue: quite the opposite; for which mode of understanding should be more adequate to human action and their history than an anthropomorphic mode, which has, of course, been sharply tested in terms of an ideology critique? At the same time a principle of non-equivalence, which allows no category to rest undisturbed, appears simply and with startling clarity as growth and withering through the modification of the goal itself in a goal-oriented, work process. Thus, not only does man change himself in accordance with his so-called higher or lower goals, but also these goals themselves, in their implementation and realization, can take on a totally unplanned, new countenance. Wundt has called this process of generation the *Heterogeny of Goals*. This need not always mean a surpassing or the original goal, as can be seen in the case of that well known potter in Horace who, wanting to turn an Amphora, produced, instead, a mere waterjug. The more infrequent surpassing of the original goal appears especially impressive in the case of Columbus who discovers a new portion of the earth instead of the sought after seaway to India; or in the case of Wagner who, after nothing but failure, decides to write a successful opera "according to Italian tastes" and comes up with "Tristan and Isolde."[1] If to the same process a mechanistic approach is applied, then another truly critical interrogation is missing, a political and moral interrogation of the goal itself, which through a mechanistic or positivistic exclusion has no place for its resolution. We refer here to the question so often implicit in adequate formulations of a goal and especially

1. Cf. "Ueber Heterogonie der Zwecke," in *Philosophische Aufsätze, Gesammelte Arbeit*, Vol. 10, 1969, pp. 431-442.

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in socialist formulations of the Good, the question of whether and of how far the means must already be homogenous with the end, whether and how far they can merely touch upon and influence the intended moral character of the goal without corrupting the goal and changing it to the point where it is no longer recognizable. *Causa aquat effectum.* This assertion might hold true for causal relationships which are entirely or predominately purpose-free, but it does not hold at all for purposive-causation. The means can and could be so different from the ends that one might say as a consequence: *The end justifies the means,* a thoroughly questionable and very reprehensible principle. But also in fact (*sachhaft*) the reverse can be true: objectionable means profane the end, even when they are used out of a sincere belief that they are a necessary evil for attaining the goal. Thus at the same time that Christianity made use of the Roman state under and through Constantine, the state made use of Christianity. Or to take a completely different, but a more modern case: while a revolutionary party makes use of a strong, central state organization—one might even say, a new, untamed, czarist type of government—the state certainly did not wither away, although that was one of the goals of the revolution. On the contrary, instead of the intended reign of freedom, a perfect state bureaucracy is produced, which maintains itself on the basis of the fifty year old announcement of the necessity of provisional arrangements during a transition period. This can only mean that improper means have shunted the goal away, be it onto a sidetrack or onto the all too distant parapet of the future. With improper means, the price can also become too high, especially when a worthy purpose from this distant parapet surrenders itself to a transcendence, as is so often the case in religious consolation. But instead of this, let us now refer to Ivan Karamazov and see how everyone, including innocent children, must suffer so that eternal harmony can be bought.[2] Why are even they, Ivan Karamazov asks, made into material for the fertilization of a future harmony? "I admit that I cannot understand why all of this is so arranged. Alyosha, I don't want to blaspheme! But I understand how greatly the universe would shake, if everything in heaven, everything on and underneath the earth flowed together in a single song of praise: if everything which lives and has lived cried out: 'Oh Lord, you are just and righteous, for your ways are now manifest.' When even the mother embraces the tormentor, who had her son torn apart from dogs, and all three sing with tears in their eyes: 'Oh Lord, you are just and righteous.' Then, yes, then, the perfection of all knowledge and understanding would be reached, then would everything be explained." But Dostoyevsky does not want to cry out in such a way. The tears of the children have not been paid off, nor can they be through revenge or forgiveness. No being could have the right in this, his own world, to forgive these facts. And if the suffering of

2. Cf. my "Geist der Utopie," in *Gesammelte Arbeit,* Vol. 3, 1964, p. 340.

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children must be calculated as part of that sum of suffering necessary to buy the truth, then the truth is not worth the price, and Ivan Karamazov, as a man of honor, declines the admission card to the Final Harmony. This acceptance of a complete desecration of the end by the means cannot be exaggerated and used to reject absolutely the use of force in the service of right and against evil, force directed against injustice and made necessary by that very injustice which itself desecrates the peace. This rejection insures the undisputed and undisturbed power of the dominant authorities and serves as a shield against revolution. This power has asserted from time immemorial in more and more secularized apologies that it has received its sword beyond a doubt from God. And if the wretched and the burdened, the humiliated and the wronged reach out for effective redress, it appeals to the Sermon on the Mount to preserve the Master-Slave relationship, or to the condemnation of force allegedly contained in that sermon. To be sure, the appeal is made to a highly incomplete interpretation of that sermon, as if the non-resistance to "evil" were required not only when an individual suffers a private injustice, but also in those cases when an injustice which cries out to a deaf heaven is perpetrated on someone else. But it is an entirely different matter if a fighter rises up in indignation for his own sake or for the sake of another. For not only what he does, but also what he allows to happen to another judges the man and probably degrades the Christian. Thomas Münzer refers exclusively to the latter case in the inclusion of the individual in the entire collective phenomenon of exploitation and humiliation. And in respect to even merely private slaps on the cheek and their endurance the same Jesus of the Sermon on the Mount can and must say that he has not come to bring peace, but the sword, that he has come to light a fire. And there is that which he might be expected to prefer—the fire is already lit. This reference to revolt, in those cases where that revolt is necessary, makes sharp demands on the end, but does not profane it through the means. In this sense, the existing moral relation between means and purpose should not and cannot be used to spread either a defeatism among the suppressed or what is closely connected, a too greatly desired and paralyzing *pessimism* concerning a goal so frequently missed or a goal which, though attained, is completely perverted and corrupted. Precisely when this pessimism is not paralyzing, but wants to search and to examine the purpose to which it has long ago been called, it should not be allowed to fall into error *usque ad finem*. Otherwise, it will become even more malicious than a mere *justificational-optimism*, permitting a simple closing of the eyes, a mere relaxation, a temporary satisfaction. Against these three forms of passivity, there exists in the unsatisfied purpose intimitations of the end itself, intimations which are especially harsh against resignation. So in the peasants' song of 1525 after the defeat: "Beaten, we drag ourselves home: our children will fight better." And also in the Psalm: "My rights should dry up, if I forget you, Jerusalem." Jerusalem stands here

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symbolically for the categories, purpose, goal and meaning. In all similar cases, no consolation is given, but rather a testament or legacy. It has a demanding utopian content even in failure and after it, except when it appears dialectically through the failure, instead of through a passive, static and fixating metaphysic of the failure itself. The truly good end cannot be kept out of circulation as something unsatisfiable even through profane means, since it carries in itself the substance, the legacy, and is therefore able to call so much more resoundingly for better means and can keep itself open to them. And so, and only so, because of the substance of the matter, can it be true that the worst Communism is always better than the best Capitalism. Nevertheless, a maxim warns us immediately of the perils facing this substantial legacy: *corruptio optimi pessima*. Nonetheless, later, in the face of bad results, we see this not only subjective, but also objective power of attraction in a worthy goal exactly as something overdue and neglected.

The means never rest merely on themselves alone. Otherwise, nothing at all could be said about them. That toward which the means are focused functions along with them, even if no corresponding intention is present or appears to be present, and even when this intention is only later recognized. Thus, means and goal are not only reciprocal notions: the relationship between the two is so determined by the goal that means and mediation of the goal in many ways coincide. In other instances where this mediation is missing, and especially in those chiefly economic cases within society, all goals have missed their function and remain abstract. The hand mill needs feudal society and the steam mill, capitalist. The forces of production determined the specific society along with its possible revolution. If this mediation is missing or if it is not taken into account, then instead of a mediated revolution which later grows by leaps and bounds, there arises a mere putsch, a short, fruitless flareup. The fullness of change might subjectively appear in the putsch, but it has nothing to do with the objective tendency which will only become capable of action when it has for itself an objective time table. This is exactly the understood tendency which makes it impossible that struggle according to this time table will have no real success before the *Nimmerleinstag,*[3] a postponement so warmly cheered by Reformism. Although out of an entirely different conviction, Reformism is paradoxically associated *in effectu* even with the anarchist putsch. The latter leaps over the tendency, while the former wears it out. Or expressed in different terms: the anarchist putsch ignores temporary goals, it flies right by them with the dilletantism of mere impatience. Reformism denies, yes, even betrays, with its conscious, short sighted goals, the ultimate goal implicit in the immediate tasks. But theoretical investigation of the basis must serve the General staff of the revolution instead of slipping off into Economism. That is, the horizons and those appearances which flame up around it must

3. A Never-neverday; a day which never comes.

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be visible in all temporary goals and the final goal which attracts, lights the way and pulls everything toward it, must in Theory-Praxis integrate all of these immediate goals because the final goal is an *Entelechy* of all promising revolutionary movements. In short, a theory is revolutionary only when it addresses itself to such a mediation of immediate goals and permanent goals, and its basic text is *Das Kapital* along with all of its horizons. Here, the distant goal is the creation of a classless society, the final goal, the face of a world opened up by us in which the subject is no longer burdened with an object alien to it. Economic-social mediation and the tendencies at work in the moments of mediation, indeed movement in general as an incompleted *Entelechy*, have in themselves that final character as a directional toward something which must penetrate, toward something which, despite the many detours and false steps, they are, as the dialectical leap (*Sprung*) shows, oriented with an invariability of direction. We can now differentiate between a dialectical and an *accidental* leap, insofar as the latter seems to appear without mediation, not as a departure, but as a complete discontinuity, or, better said, as an unforseeable intersection of mediation-series which are foreign to one another. The accident appears to be established exactly at the point of this intersection and nowhere in the series which cross one another. The jump which the accident represents is usually something disruptive, like a crack (*Sprung*) in a cup. It is seldom something helpful like a gift from Fate and is never a leap crowned by mediation out of and in the event itself. To be sure, a dialectical leap also breaks away from the mediation series, but it is not completely disparate from this series and even less disparate from the progressive manner of a dialectical *antithesis*. It appears as a sudden, groundbreaking result of mediation. Leibniz denies the possibility of this leap in the preface to his *Noveaux Essais* and announces his universally valid principle of continuity (*Lex continui*): *Natura non facit saltus*. Yet Hegel declares to the contrary that continuity is actually enriched through its disruption: "It is not hard to see that our time is a time of birth and the transition to a new period. Spirit has broken with the hitherto existing world of its being and representation and is ready to let it fall into the past and work on its transformation. To be sure, Spirit is never at rest, but is in constant progressive movement. But as with a child after a long, quiet period of nourishment, the first breath disrupts that gradual process of ever increasing development—a qualitative jump—and just at that moment, the child is born, so too does self-constituting Spirit slowly and quietly develop toward a new form; it dissolves one small part of the construction of its previous world after another, its tottering being hinted at only by particular signs; the dissipation as well as the boredom which tear apart the existing order and the uncertain suspicion of something unknown, of something which is brewing, are forbidden. The gradual crumbling, which does not change the physiognomy of the whole, will be disrupted by a sudden change, a lightning

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bolt, which in one stroke installs the structure of the new world... The reality of this simple whole consists, however, in the fact that its newly created forms show themselves as new, but these new elements have developed and been given shape in the previous whole."[4] With Hegel, the new is, of course, present in the old form: but according to the late Hegel, the Hegel of the conservative *Rechtsphilosophie*, when contemplative Spirit understands a new form of life as already having come to pass, the grey-on-grey of philosophy can no longer rejuvenate it. This means, in effect, that philosophy can only remember, it can only know through a rebounding Anamnesis, it can allow and discover nothing completely new, no open possibilities in the not-yet-known, in the not-yet-being of a real future. In contrast, the qualitative leap put forth by the early Hegel is actually a leap towards the *Novum* and is announced by portents which it itself sets forth. This is not only true of a history which has already come to its end, as Hegel wants to assert, but rather for every Present and, above all, for its domain of possibility (*Horisontgebeit*). The latter is filled with the still hidden potential (*Latenz*) of the goal determined substantial, primordial as well as final ground of the tendency. The tendency is directed toward making this still hidden potential known during the process as well as in general. Here especially, in the 'not-yet' condition of this substantial essence, the *Novum* ferments and strains. There is always an oscillating relationship between the leap and mediation, insofar as the mediation penetrates the leap, even becomes superfluous to it, and insofar as the existing result poses further contradictions and antitheses as its result. The mediation continues through these contradictions and antitheses and proceeds to new material steps. The dialectic itself, which drives both toward and on the new, has its most relentless center in the antithesis, a motor-like dissatisfaction, the condition of not-yet-having-arrived, which is characteristic of transmission. The dialectic does not have its center in the always subsequent synthesis of Hegel, a comparative rest after a storm or after a dialectical leap. This rest is always disturbed by a renewed antithetical eruption in itself. Dialectic means, therefore, not the unity of contradictions, but the unity of the unity and the contradictions. The logical pre-formation of the dialectical lies in the formal principle of contradiction which denies that what is asserted is and is not identical to the same thing at the same time and in the same respects. This in no way amounts to a denial of the existence of a contradiction, but means that the contradiction is not materially maintainable. The Aristotelian definition of the principle of contradiction, therefore, does not contradict the Hegelian tendency and the solution which constantly regenerates contradiction leading to a synthesis with a new leap which itself embodies a fresh contradiction, *sui generis*. This is, therefore, the relation to the purpose, the purpose, which functioning as a cause, is

4. Cf. G.W.F. Hegel, *Werke*, Vol. II, 1832, pp. 10f.

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also in contradiction, a relationship which conforms at the same time to its goal and its meaning. Purpose, goal and meaning in general are increases of the same teleological impulse. But the purpose always involves the goal, the self-disturbing cohesion which has recently succeeded in reaching a higher level. Finally, the purpose involves the possible meaning in the entire transmission of the cohesion itself, whose immanent *Agens agendum* has a source of unrest different from that of the contradiction. This *agens agendum* is the first as well as the last impulse to come out of the darkness of the Moment and the poverty of that which is all too unmediated. It transmits itself along the course of its process-like unfolding. This same process takes place underneath the surface; the purpose which functions as a cause encroaches upon the Finality and is involved with the core of each event, with the primal event, the cause (*Ur-sache*) in general. This riddle, that the ground has not yet been brought out into the light and has not yet been resolved and therefore is a non-ground: this riddle acts in and goes beyond all finality. It is constantly active as that which in the last analysis is the final-central impulse of the still completely utopian and developing *substantiality*. It is, above all else, active in the forms of a still unfinished world now being produced. The fact that everything which exists is caused should not only be thought of in the common way. Scientific thought is constitutive. This mode of thinking does not have a psychological, but rather a uniquely logical, constitutive basis (*Woher* and *Weil*). Causal judgments and conclusions rest on the formal, logical axiom, the principle of ground. This is not only a principle of formal logic. It has a formative impulse in itself which can be intelligibly understood: For every definite ground, the consequences are determined with a conceptual necessity: for every set of definite consequences, the sufficient ground is superceded (*aufgehoben*): this is a conceptual necessity. This principle preforms the deduction, the inference based on a formal causal cohesion, i.e., the "conceptually" necessary cohesion points to a "materially" necessary cohesion which specifically constitutes a causal connection. Specific in the sense of "inviolable," and unbreakable "chain," a formal relationship; Ground-consequence as well as the material aspect: Cause-effect are produced. This explains why the Principle of Sufficient Reason conforms in all typical, normal simple, isomorphic cases to the causal principle that the consequent contains nothing new. The Principle of Sufficient Reason is in its normal use already analytic, even tautological, since the consequent can be posited along with the ground only if it is contained as a part in the contents of the ground. Here, there is a material distinction between a condition and a cause, in that causality does not exhaust itself in a strictly inclusive, causal concept. From here our attention is directed retrospectively toward a mere Physics of the Given which produces a compilation of regular, inclusive repetitions. In terms of the future, such a Physics comprehends only the expected, a repetition of that which has come to pass

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over and over again, the stereotypes of an inauthentic future. This method of anticipating the future is more a *sine qua non*. And it is exactly this state of suspension, the incomplete fulfillment of conditions, which results in the more or less certain prognosis whose lack of reliability is due only to a lack of knowledge. Where one does not observe such limitations, one can still hold fast because the effect is posited with the cause: causes do not have different degrees of maturity, there is no partial causation. Conditions, on the other hand, are different: the presence of the condition will not necessarily guarantee the consequences associated with that condition. That conditions maintain themselves in a state of suspension between the possible and objective-real possibility means again the state of being partially conditioned. Or, in terms of what this means for the cause: one can say, to be sure, that something is more or less conditioned, but not, however, that it is more or less caused, in the same way that one cannot speak of partial causation. No one has ever asserted the equivalent, there is a *causa sine qua non*: the expression, *conditio sine qua non*, is however, common. There are no uncaused events, but there are more or less conditioned events. The cause is, therefore, a *cum qua* to be added: the condition, a *sine qua non*. Thus, Marx can say that the conditions for the victory of the working class are fulfillable, even though no one speaks of fulfilled causes. And it is exactly this condition of suspension of the partially fulfilled condition which gives the category, Possibility, *qua* partial conditionality, its openness and depth. The investigation of partial conditionality looks to the future and anticipates possibilities which are relatively more open and susceptible to being influenced, possibilities which deal not only with the expected but also with the unexpected, the new. This already points to the fact that partial conditionality does not limit itself to the objective side, but needs subjective conditions and can be grasped by the latter and set in motion. Conditions of both types tend toward their reciprocal completion, demand the realization of their possibility, but in distinction to causation, they do not posit in a lawlike manner that which is their consequent. *Item*: causes are material presuppositions of lawlike, necessary realization: conditions are the material presuppositions of a possible realization which will not come to pass without the help of an intervening subject. Thus, Capitalism develops in itself the conditions, not the causes, for a revolutionary breakthrough into Socialism in such a way that in its coming to an end, it makes the breakthrough possible, but it does not contain the break as a law-like, necessary consequence. Here is the point to correctly place the relation between conditions and cause, since cause will be better understood. Causes do not mature like conditions, but determine the realization of the possible according to its partial conditionality. Conditions create only a charged atmosphere, in which the subjective factor must enter as something new, as an active, dissolving factor. Conditions, therefore, set the possible, but they do not do anything. The realization of the possible as something new occurs

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through the subjective factor working as an active cause in human history and in the Finality of nature which is mediated with that history. This factor sticks to revolutionary work and thereby actually determines a revolutionary result. The temporary power of the subjective, revolutionary factors must, however, be informed and led by a prior causal investigation of unfavorable circumstances and by the discovery of new causes. Politically, that means the further mobilization of existing causes and the creation of new ones. The latter does not mean anything like a permanent political revolution which would be a bad infinite, but it does not mean a causal production of revolutionary results. Causality is in no way static through a reified necessity, but is a process; and since the dialectic pervades this single law, it has none of the standstills or the inescapable necessity of allegedly iron, eternal laws in accordance with which we must complete the circle of our being. A stone falls far enough in conformity with the laws for falling bodies, but the laws governing the fall of capitalism are different from those of the stone. They are in no sense eternal with *causa aquat effectum* and a nothing-new-under-the-dubious-sun 'repetition.' *Item*: in order to understand causality and law in a new causal sense which is just as dialectical as the dialectic, the double limitation of an all too linear causal nexus and an all too equivalent causal effect must be superceded. The only world moving causality is that of the dialectic. Only a too narrowly conceived causality is limited to a uni-linearity. This corresponds to another, linear series which is very hard to reverse and which is not to any great extent entangled with other series. It corresponds to this in accordance with the assumption that the consequences are known and posited with the ground and that the ground, with the coming of the consequence, is superceded only with reference to that consequent. Of course, the new causal relationship since the time of Galileo is essentially oriented toward movement, toward a pushing and pulling, but the mechanical impulse works in the same way as the movement, essentially linear, local. It is not exhausted in the action, not at all; it travels forward. The action can become a cause of another action, even in an infinitely repeating consequence. A return effect on the cause is as little considered as the creation of something new, which was not already in the cause. Hegel calls this 'externality' of a mechanically conceived causality the bad Infinite, the perennial progress. That is, it does not come to a "reflection into itself," nor to a reciprocal action in which cause and effect intertwine with one another. The linear repetition of mechanical causation in limitless progression posits, thereby, a marking of time, i.e., an unchangeable equivalence of cause and effect. The fundamental principle itself, *causa aquat effectum*, not only implies for Galileo as well as Descartes that the momentum remains the same in the transmission from one body to another; it also signifies a situation-interpretation of the world in which a process or leap into something new is not possible. We have already referred to the analytic character of the principle of sufficient reason, insofar as it is a

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question of its normal use. This analytic character materially returns to the causal principle. Hegel's *Logik* correctly emphasizes that the difference between the mechanically grasped cause and effect is an external difference: "This causality is an analytic proposition because of the identity of the contents. It is the same thing which presents itself one time as the cause and another as the effect, first as a peculiar substance, then as posited or as a determination by something other than itself."[5] The tautological character of the contents also limits the undeveloped, i.e., the development of foreign causal relationships, to the mechanical. This is to be distinguished from the developed relationships of reciprocal interaction. "But principally, the illegitimate application of causal relationships to relationships of the physical organic and mental life must still be noted. Here we see that which is called a cause has, to be sure, a different content than the effect. This is because that which works on the living is independently determined, changed and transformed by the living... Throughout history, both the conscious masses and the individual have engaged in a game and a mutual determination with one another. But the nature of Spirit is involved in a still much higher sense than the character of the living...not as a cause which allows that character to continue, but as that which breaks it up and changes it."[6] The dialectical (anti-static) power working against an effect, which is nothing more than a manifestation of a cause, are valid in spite of the fact that this quotation from Hegel expresses an idealism with its raised, highly elevated "Nature of Spirit." The nature of the proposition, *causa aquat effectum*, which makes it completely foreign to the notion of a process, is again made clear as soon as the proposition is seen in respect to its difficulties with a mechanical equivalent of warmth. Differentiations cannot help, especially those proposed by E. V. Hartmann in his "Doctrine of Categories," an undialectically conceived and undialectically completed notion of causality. Hartmann places next to the "isotropic" causality an "allotropic" which has a different way (*Tropos*) of manifesting contents. The psychophysical causality which lies between the brain and the soul is especially tagged as "allotropic" and is even spoken about in terms of an unacknowledged, dialectical of the transition from quantity to quality. Causality "does not remain bare in this transition, i.e., an intensity without qualities, as it is in the objective, real sphere, but earns for the forfeiture of activity with its merely quantitative determination the entire riches of quality" (*Kategorienlehre*, Zweitdruck, Vol. III, 1923, p. 66). But the qualitative remains in Hartmann confined to the subjective, ideal sphere; nothing is important here for the sphere of objective-real process. The dialectical is, of course, in all cases of allotropism significantly implied; it is, however, unexpressed as is also the case in biological Neovitalism despite its

5. Hegel, *Werke*, VI, *op.cit.*, pp. 227f.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 226f.

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attempted resurrection of a concept of purpose against mechanistic theories. Although causality is becoming increasingly more appropriate and this appropriateness, increasingly more obvious, or rather has not yet become obvious enough to save causality from being reduced to a mere mechanism, mechanism still presents itself very often as a battle cry against every expanded notion of causality. There is, nonetheless, a causality of reciprocal effect and, above all, a causality of purposive functioning as cause in an inciting (*treibenden*) finality and a self-seeking substantiality of events. As a result, the limitations as well as the modified validity of the causal principle are not within themselves determinable. And also not within the pure, formalistic conception, the decline of the principle of ground. With the ground as *ratio* from the beginning, instead of as an intensive ground of existence; with the consequent as simply automatic and undeniable, instead of being capable of change, being ripe with change, but, at the same time, an ordered process. Only the dialectic changes the causal principle from an a-priori analytic to an a-posteriori, expanding, synthetic. The dialectic extracts from the principle that which in it is worth the development, *reciprocal effect, causality of contradictions,* and the *Agens-Agendum* of the *utopian primordial cause and event* (*Ur-Sache*).

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*The Neo-Idealist Defense of Subjectivity**

by Andrew Arato

Any history of Marxism from Marx to the Frankfurt School which proceeds through the Second International to Lukács, Gramsci, and Korsch to more recent Marxist reformulations will not make much sense since no continuity will be possible to establish. In fact, to understand any version of Marxism after Lukács and the 1920s (excluding, of course, the vulgar varieties of many "orthodox" renditions) it is crucial to critically examine the neo-Kantian debates around the turn of the century. This is the proper context within which to trace the philosophical and socio-historical problematic of the Lukács of *History and Class-Consciousness* and of all further "Western Marxism." The tortuous path of Critical Theory from Marx to Habermas detours through the neo-Kantians, thus avoiding the positivist swamps of vulgar Second International ideology which, afterwards, is dealt with roughly as part of the problem. The following is an attempt to trace the main lines of the development of that neo-Kantianism which was most influential in the genesis of modern Critical Theory, via Lukács. It focuses on the problem of subjectivity and its proper thematization.

I

Any discussion of subjectivity and its detractors at the turn of the century must begin with positivism. The name is Auguste Comte's gift to posterity. Loose usage, however, understands a wide range of (not unrelated) nineteenth century intellectual positions by the name. Empiricist methodology and associationist psychology are typical aspects of most positivisms, but a naturalist conception of knowledge in general and a mechanical, determinist conception of natural science belongs to only some of them. An implicit ontology of factuality (collapse of essence and appearance, extreme phenomenalism) is pressuposed by all positivist tendencies, but only August Comte based his positivism on a philosophy of history.[1] At any rate, positivism is always objectivistic: in all its forms it represents an attack on subjectivity, on both the epistemological knowing subject as well as the historical acting subject. The empiricist cult of factuality delimits and isolates separate spheres of factual expertise. Subjective synthesis is fragmented accordingly. The ontology of facts presupposes the existence of a totally independent realm of facts which also

* I am indebted to Paul Piccone for his help and suggestions in polishing and editing this copy.

1. Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, trans. by J. Shapiro (*Boston: Beacon Press*, 1971) p. 71 ff.

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includes and subsumes the facts we call subjects. Of course, the destruction of free subjectivity in any mechanical, naturalistic determinism is obvious.[2] Once epistemology and history are reduced[3] to psychology, psychology to biology, biology to chemistry and physics, we cannot speak of "subject" either in the epistemological or historical sense.

From the point of view of the destruction of subjectivity we can outline three historical stages in the development of positivism. Although containing most of the previously mentioned conceptual elements, the first stage was not positivist in the strict sense. We are speaking of the French Enlightenment. The Enlightenment mobilized empiricism and naturalism, in several different forms, as attributes of an autonomous and critical Reason directed at entrenched absolutism and dogmatism. But the combination of this idea of Reason and several elements tending toward the destruction of subjectivity was highly unstable. Its unity was sustained by a revolutionary class believing in the universality of its fragmented perspective. However, the very same philosophical elements (empiricism and naturalism) were mobilized by the second stage of positivism, by Comte's philosophy of history to discredit precisely this Enlightenment idea of Reason. Comte's positivism was frankly apologetic for a newly established law and order. But Comte did, apparently, believe in the progressive nature of what was established; he saw his as a "positive age" (as opposed to earlier theological and metaphysical ages) increasingly characterized by the useful intervention of science through the prediction and control of all aspects of social existence. His faith in scientific progress sustained a tenuous theoretical combination of extreme empiricism, a dogmatic faith in natural science, an obviously non-empirical philosophy of history (the "law of three stages"), and eventually even a new religion. Comte's new science of society, sociology, was predicated on the notion of progress. Yet, the very structure of this new science was conservative. Once the positive stage of history is reached, for Comte "progress" is conceivable only within the given order.[4] But the conservatism of Comte's science went deeper. As Herbert Marcuse shows, he consciously eliminated all critical and negative concepts from sociology,[5] and restricted the notion of reality to immediate appearance. But if what appears is true, the only function of thought becomes purely

2. In Kant, determinism is a function of the synthetic activity of the transcendental subject. In all forms of positivism, of course, this subject is eliminated.

3. Naturalism does not always mean reduction. Thus, in Comte, the method of the natural sciences is exemplary, but he maintained an irreducible hierarchy of the sciences. Cf. Ernst Cassirer, *The Problem of Knowledgee*, trans. W.H. Woglom and C.W. Hendel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p. 246; Leszek Kolakowski, *The Alienation of Reason*, trans. N. Guterman (New York: Doubleday, 1968), pp. 59-60.

4. Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution* (3rd ed.; Boston: Beacon Press, 1960), p. 345.

5. Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution, op. cit.*, p. 340. Marcuse also argues (though he does not sufficiently demonstrate) that Comte's disregard of political economy is an implicit disregard of the realm of alienation that would demonstrate his positive concepts as superficial and self-contradictory.

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receptive. The synthetic, active and reflective dimension of theory, the dimensions of subjectivity, were replaced by Comte with a combination of theoretical passivity (copy theory of knowledge) and social engineering.[6]

The third stage of nineteenth century positivism is characterized by an increasing disintegration of the Comtean synthesis. His philosophy of history was the first element to be discarded. There was, of course, a widespread attempt to replace it with the theory of evolution. But the latter was a theory from biological science (though Spencer generalized it into a cosmology);[7] hence, the attempt represented a somewhat more plausible use of naturalism (than the mechanistic use of biology or physics) to provide a foundation for the historical and social sciences.[8] However, a further moment of disintegration tended to tear asunder even this unity of naturalism and the special sciences. The third stage of positivism is confusing precisely because of the untenability of the synthesis of naturalism and empiricism.

It is important to distinguish between three stages of nineteenth (and late eighteenth) century positivism especially because the German critics of positivism saw it as a monolithic tendency. Conservative German Academics tended to associate positivism, with the decline of personal cultivation, with democracy, industrialization, "modernization" and the "coming of masses."[9] To understand these charges, we must first recall that the German Enlightenment had very few positivist elements while its own forms of anti-dogmatism and anti-absolutism were never concretized in a successful democratic revolution. If German Liberalism was ever fundamentally critical of absolutism and dogma (and, of course, its great philosophical forebearer, Kant *was*), during the course of the nineteenth century, it underwent a serious change of function.[10] It increasingly became a justification and not a critique of the traditional order. This change of function was superficially parallel to the transformation of positivism from critique to apology. But the social bases that German liberalism and French positivism justified were completely different. Even Germany's extremely rapid industrialization in the last quarter of the nineteenth century was not under the aegis of a state controlled by a powerful bourgeoisie. As a result, the importation of positivism, and especially the cult of natural science, into Germany seemed to have a modernizing anti-traditional implication when in Western Europe this implication was seriously shaken. Thus, Comte's system

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 343f.
7. Kolakowski, *The Alienation of Reason, op.cit.*, pp. 91-92.
8. Of course, it can also be argued along with R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956) that the theory of evolution represented a historicization of biological nature. But as Collingwood admits, the "evolutionist" amalgam of history and nature was objectivistic, deterministic and, in the end, naturalistic.
9. Fritz Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 42ff and esp. pp. 299f.
10. For the dialectic of German Liberalism cf. Leonard Krieger, *The German Idea of Freedom* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957).

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culminated in a fantastic religion of humanity, and Taine thought his naturalistic positivism quite compatible with a Catholocizing conservative attack on the French Revolution. On the other hand, the powerful impact of various dimensions of positivism on German Social Democracy shows that the methods of natural science could appear progressive in the context of the democratic battle with German reaction. The Social Democrats (unlike Marx himself) were extremely susceptible to an objectivistic, deterministic theory even before such a theory became functional in the context of their increasing organizational, bureaucratic conservatism. Yet, they were heirs of the (French) Enlightenment, and not of Auguste Comte. In the case of the critics of positivism, it is less easy to distinguish between their responses to the various stages. They often associated positivism with democracy. After all, the Enlightenment tended to be democratic and Comte favored industrialization. So, positivism and the evils of industrialization could also be associated. Nevertheless, if we argue, along with Fritz Ringer,[11] that the critical response of German "mandarins" to positivism is the critique of a strawman set up to embody all of the ills of modernization, we fail to distinguish between irrationalist and rationalist critiques of modern capitalist society, and positivism. There is no question that "cultural critics" such as Lagarde and Langbehn attacked positivism, industrialization, and democracy from a totally irrationalist point of view.[12] Overemphasizing their few insights, they never understood what they were against. Yet, contrary to both the Social Democrats and the irrationalists, they understood some of the real dangers of positivism in science and philosophy. To begin with, their critique had a specific, historical object. The third stage of positivism, characterized by a coexistence (at times a forced synthesis) of naturalism and empiricism can in fact be located in Germany, and not only in France and England. The increasing impossibility of the Comtean synthesis of extreme empiricism and naturalistic metaphysics was an implicit product of the development of individual philological and historical sciences. Most philologists and historians, especially in Germany, tended to restrict themselves to extremely limited areas of investigation, and they excluded all philosophy (even positivist philosophy) from their research.[13] They emphasized something parallel to one aspect of Comte's original positivism to the exclusion of all others. Nevertheless, there were some attempts at synthesis coming from a naturalizing direction. In England, Herbert Spencer tried to continue Comte's project of uncovering the laws of history through a natural science of society, sociology. In France, Hypolite Taine, generally a master of exact, factual historical description, sought a

11. Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins, op.cit.*, pp. 298-299.

12. For an important study of the irrationalist critiques of Lagarde, Langbehn, etc., cf. Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1961).

13. Benedetto Croce, *History, its Theory and Practice*, trans. D. Ainslie (New York: Russel and Russel, 1960), pp. 289ff; Collingwood, *The Idea of History, op.cit.*, pp. 127ff.

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deterministic and naturalizing synthesis on the bases of a finite number of causal factors, "race," "milieu," "time."[14] And in Germany, under the influence of the reductionist (physicalist) experimental psychology (psychophysics) of Fechner and Wundt, Karl Lamprecht attempted to reduce history to applied psychology. He explicitly wanted to convert history into a natural science on the conceptual foundation of a small set of psychological types.[15] Thus, in spite of the theoretical weakness of naturalism (among other things, naturalist theoreticians tended to have a poor understanding of natural science) the special sciences, having purged themselves of any ground of synthesis, remained susceptible to a naturalist synthesis. Only a transformation of positivism's philosophical bases into an explicitly antiphilosophical, anti-reflective philosophy tended to destroy at least the unsophisticated forms of naturalistic synthesis. This last dimension of positivism had its full repercussions only in the twentieth century.

The anti-philosophic philosophy of Ernst Mach represented an undisguised attack on epistemological subjectivity. For Mach, the facts of external experience and internal experience were sensations (elements) which could be "fictionally" synthesized into larger units only for the sake of intellectual convenience [*Denkökonomie*]. He recognized no "wholes" in experience and no unified source of the synthesis of wholes. Most positivists had an atomistic conception of factual experience, and so did Mach. "Essential" reality is the totality of facts as they are immediately given, there is nothing hidden that only philosophical reflection can penetrate. As Habermas shows, Mach undertook reflection only to destroy reflection and the very notion of subjectivity.[16] The fragmentation of reality and of consciousness he saw as primordial facts: indeed this is his main ontological premiss. His other premiss, itself hardly substantiated, was that physics and "psychophysics" are models for the theoretical representation of the factual, for the "mimetic adaptation of thought to facts." Naturalism here appears in a new form, as the model for the correct anti-metaphysical, methodological approach to a world of facts. Mach did eliminate a naturalist metaphysics, but he implicitly retained an ontology of factuality that destroyed the very meaning of the notion "subject." Richard Avenarius traveled roughly the same road. He also sought to eliminate the distinction between subject and object, consciousness and reality, psychology and physics. Avenarius, however, tended to retain a naturalizing—or rather biologizing—metaphysics. He treated cognition as a biological fact associated with the central nervous system. This procedure allowed Avenarius to reduce the concept of truth in particular, and values in general to biological functioning. It also allowed him (and here he is different from Mach) to think of the goal of a (naturalist) philosophy as the construction of a unified

14. Cassirer, *The Problem of Knowledge, op. cit.*, pp. 248ff.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 285-287; Ringer *The Decline..., op. cit.*, pp. 302-304.
16. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, pp. 81ff.

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scientific world view. The explicit aim of this world view was the philosophical destruction of the subject, or the transformation of subjectivity into a biological datum.[17] Although influential in some philosophical circles, the world view of Avenarius and Mach had little effect on the specialized sciences. Philosophy itself, above all positivist and "neo-positivist" philosophy, increasingly became *one* of the special sciences. But, as such (and this is implied by Mach, and explicitly stated by the early Wittgenstein), it has no reason to exist.

Thus, late nineteenth century positivism was a mixture or uneasy synthesis of three types of thought: anti-philosophical philosophy, naturalist metaphysics and, perhaps most important, anti-philosophical specialized science. To be fair to the last tendency, it generally resisted the intrusions even of the two positivist types of philosophy and therefore its self-understanding was not positivist. But, drastically fragmenting subjectivity, the special sciences could refuse naturalist intrusion only on dogmatically skeptical grounds. To the extent they could not counterattack, they became parts of the overall positivist attack on subjectivity. The philosophical critique of various aspects of positivism was, at least initially, an attempt to bolster the sagging defenses of the special sciences and to turn them in a decisively non-positivist direction. Ultimately, however, the neo-idealist defenders of the special sciences felt themselves constrained to move toward the construction of world views that would rival positivism and scientism.

Thus, in his lecture "Die Erneuerung des Hegelianismus" (1910) Windelband attempted to explain the reasons of the revival of speculative Hegelianism in an intellectual world dominated by the empirical special sciences. According to Windelband, Immanuel Kant transformed philosophy into a special science [*Wissenschaft*] with a special research area—the critique of reason. Windelband interprets this "research area" according to the principles and interests of his school of neo-Kantianism as the science of the constitutive principles of culture.[18] But he admits that Kant himself did not give this interpretation of his theory, although the empirical referent of his "consciousness as such," i.e., of the transcendental locus of the *a priori* categories, did tend to move from the human psyche to human history. Accordingly, his theory as a whole implied two possible interpretations, a psychological one and a historical one, and two dangers, psychologism and historicism. The two interpretations, according to Windelband, were developed by Fries and Hegel, and once again, after the collapse of Hegelianism, by two wings of the "back to Kant" movement. Thus, Windelband interprets early neo-Kantianism (and even the Marburg

17. Kolakowski, *The Alienation of Reason*, pp. 107-108ff; p. 131.

18. Wilhelm Windelband, "Die Erneuerung des Hegelianismus," *Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter's Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1910), pp. 9-12.

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school) as psychologistic and positivistic. He considered the (Hegelian) stress on history as progressive because (associationist) psychology is a natural science unable to justify the *a priori* conditions of natural science, of "nature" itself. These *a priori* conditions Windelband calls not categories but *Vernunftwerte*, "rational values" or "values of reason," and according to him they emerge *through history*, though the history of culture (in Hegel's terminology: *objektiver Geist*). This interpretation of the Kantian *a priori* is already enriched by Hegel. But, according to Windelband, the theory of objective spirit poses a new danger: historicism. A historicism that would reduce *Vernunftwerte* or *Kulturwerte* to an immanent product of empirical history, would have reductionist and relativistic consequences similar to those of psychologism. Windelband answers this danger with the two worlds theory of his school (following Lask, Windelband connects the theory to Hegel) dividing the world into the "ought" and the "is," into validity and existence, into values and empirical value realizations. But he immediately admits that a new danger is implied here: a metaphysical or even theological interpretation of "consciousness as such," the subject correlate of the ought, of values, of validity. Windelband interprets Hegel's dialectic as succumbing to this final danger, by hypostasizing the movement of thought, by submerging empirical reality in an Absolute subject of thought.

Thus, Windelband attempts to steer his own theory through the dangers of psychologism, historicism and metaphysical speculation. But by 1910 (and this is why he re-considers Hegel) he is also attempting to provide a new worldview rivaling positivism. In this context his own position is rather precarious. On the one hand, criticizing Hegel, he insists that after Kant philosophy must remain a specialized science, with a special research area. (Thus he submits to the positivistic fragmentation of the theoretical world.) On the other hand, he hopes to generate the basis of a total world view from philosophy, i.e., to generate the values presupposed in all forms of cultural activity. In this deeply ambiguous conception philosophy is both a specialized empirical science (or cultural activity) and the transcendental self-reflection of reason. Windelband's essay is especially interesting, because he is considering Hegel who attempted precisely to work out a dialectic of transcendental and historical subjectivity by concretizing and externalizing transcendental constitution as objective spirit, as history. Windelband sees this achievement of Hegel's but his concession to a fragmented world cancels his insight. But a theory of objective spirit exuding synthesis and reconciliation must have seemed like a rationalistic utopia in the fragmented, alienated world where philosophy found itself. Thus, neo-idealism did begin a battle with positivism, but victory was beyond its reach. Positivism was an especially formidable opponent not because of its theoretical power, but because of its special plausability in a world that met it half-way. The critique of positivism could not be successful as long as it understood itself as primarily a critique of only a rival theoretical position,

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or as an individualistic, contemplative critique that confronted an unchangable (but "tragic") socio-cultural world.

II

W. Dilthey began the theoretical attack on the nineteenth century positivism that came to be called the *Methodenstreit*. In spite of positivistic elements in his own work, it is a great mistake to read his intentions differently.[19] He considered the naturalization of history in the sociology of Comte and Spencer and the "mindless" empiricism of the specialized historical sciences to be the two dangers that necessitated the reformulation of the bases of the *Geisteswissenschaften*. Furthermore, he did not interpret the cultural crisis implied by positivism merely as the crisis of the sciences. The fragmentation of consciousness by all special sciences and the integration of these fragments in abstract laws by the naturalist sciences were placed by Dilthey in a historical context dominated by industrial division of labor and mechanization of men. He compared modern society as a whole to a mechanized factory with its great and narrow specialization, technological ignorance and loss of meaning and purpose for individuals.[20] He believed that the life of civilization was at stake: he feared the total destruction of all meaning and coherence. The special sciences, in their naturalistic optimism or empiricistic pessimism implied an increased separation of knowledge from human life.[21] They contributed to the general disintegration in the only area where for Dilthey a reintegration was still possible. He expected little from the natural sciences. They construct a hypothetical world for the sake of the control of our external environment.[22] They could become the models for the *Geisteswissenschaften* only in a mutilated world where men are *only* instruments for other men. The resistance of the individual historical and social sciences to naturalization was for Dilthey the healthy resistance of disciplines which were still intuitively immersing themselves in the study of the aspects of human creativity. Yet, their resistance was to be unsuccessful or lead to totally skeptical (and atomistic) consequences because they lacked a systematic and vital basis that would unite them all. This basis Dilthey at first hoped to locate in a new psychology.[23]

19. Cf. for example, H. A. Hodges *The Philosophy of Wilhelm Dilthey* (London; Routledge, 1952) for an interpretation of Dilthey as a positivist.

20. Wilhelm Dilthey, *Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften* in his *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by B. Groethuysen, I. (Leipzig and Berlin: Verlag von B. G. Teubner, 1922), p. 3.

21. Wilhelm Dilthey, *Ideen uber eine beschreibende und zergliederne psychologie* in his *Ges. Schr.*, ed. by G. Misch, V. (1924), p. 145.

22. Manfred Riedel, "Einleitung" to W. Dilthey, *Der Aufbau der geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), p. 55; Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests, op cit.*, pp. 142-144.

23. Riedel, on the bases of the so-called "Breslauer Ausarbeitung" of a volume II. of the *Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften* (written in 1880, but still in ms.) makes a strong case for

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Dilthey knew that the project of the foundation of the *Geisteswissenschaften* on psychology must have seemed to his contemporaries like letting in positivism and naturalism through the front door. The psychology of the late nineteenth century was associationist in theory and experimentalist in practice. Almost all of the historical and social sciences had to fight their battles against the invasion of naturalistic psychology which, as Dilthey admits, had nothing but the mutilation of specific subject matter to offer. Dilthey adds that even on its own ground the psychology of his time was a failure. Because it was too formal and general the higher forms of mental life had to escape it. Because it constructed from isolated elements (themselves the result of abstraction from the flux of psychical experience) the unity of life could not be recovered by it. Nevertheless, Dilthey persisted in seeking a psychological foundation for the *Geisteswissenschaften* because, as he put it: "outside of the psychic units [psycho-physical unities of life, human individuals] that form the object of psychology, there are no other spiritual [*geistige*] facts for our experience [*Erfahrung*]."[24] This apparent identification of *psyche* and *geist*, even on the basis of a new psychology, was to involve Dilthey in serious difficulties. There is an additional identification here: psyche is identified with "life." "The spiritual [*geistige*] life of a man, separable only through abstraction, is a part of the psycho-physical unity of life...The system of these unities is the reality that amounts to the object of the historical-social sciences."[25] Dilthey did not explicitly identify this system with the metaphysical concept *Life* of his later works, but he could have. The concept never solved the problem of individual and totality in his later works, and here he presents us precisely with this unsolved problem. Dilthey claims that the object of psychology exhausts the totality of *geistige* facts, while psychology is only one of the *Geisteswissenschaften*. Psychology proper is the science of the abstracted human individual. Indeed, the social and historical world is composed only of such individuals, but psychology can be the study of only the isolated individual (itself a whole) and not society and history (which are wholes of wholes).[26] This problem *alone* seems to invalidate the whole project of psychologizing history and society. But Dilthey does not stop here. He

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an early attempt on Dilthey's part to give a non-psychologistic grounding to the *Geisteswissenschaften* on the foundation of a new transcendental *Grundwissenschaft* that presupposes intersubjectivity from the outset. This would mean that many of the important theses of Dilthey's post-1905 period were anticipated by him already in 1880. Furthermore, the unpublished manuscript apparently contains Dilthey's most comprehensive attack on positivism. However, we feel justified in keeping to a more traditional interpretation of Dilthey because we are interested in a public topography of ideas around the turn of the century; our object is not Dilthey's philosophical development *per se*. And Riedel himself finds Dilthey's turn to psychology (given the "Breslauer Ausarbeitung") quite inexplicable. Cf. Riedel, *op.cit.*, pp. 30ff.; 45ff., and 52ff.

24. Dilthey, *Ges. Schr.* I., *op.cit.*, p. 29.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

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refuses to retreat from psychology to a Kantian, transcendental constitution of the world that would integrate both individual and the historical world into the constructed world of an intellectualized subject in "whose veins no real blood flows."[27] Dilthey insists that on the bases of his "historical and psychological concerns" he will put together the *Geisteswissenschaften* only from "whole" men. But the study of *isolated* "whole" men will not validate the identity of psychological and historical concerns. Therefore, Dilthey initiates a plan for the reform of psychology: for the creation of a new psychology that would provide analytic knowledge of the "general characteristics" of men understood as elements of society.[28]

The project of the creation of a descriptive and analytical [*Zergliederne*] psychology as opposed to the established explanatory psychology, that tries to deduce the whole of mental life from a few constructed assumptions, was already mentioned by Dilthey in his *Einleitung* (1884). At this stage, the project seemed to be itself a bit constructionist, indistinguishable from a speculative anthropology that could serve as the canon of interpretation of historical life. Dilthey insists that the new psychology must not simply mean a deeper introspective self-contemplation of man. "A type of human nature always stands between the historian and his sources, from which he wants to awaken figures to pulsating life; the aim of the new psychology (or anthropology) is to make this type more correct and fruitful." Dilthey never overcame the notion that somehow we can and should derive even the highest manifestations of human creativity from a finite number of anthropological types,[29] but at the same time he never intended to give merely a dogmatic (and of course, constructionist and naturalistic "human nature") solution to the problem of mediation between individual and society; to the problem of intersubjectivity. On the contrary, and especially in his *Ideen über eine beschreibende und zergliederne Psychologie* (1894) he sought to locate in experience itself the unit of experience that would permit drawing together historical analysis and psychological description. This unit was the *Erlebnis*.[30] We don't have to decide here to what extent Dilthey was influenced by Brentano.[31] Their intentions were to a large extent similar: to describe the unity of psychic experience *vis-à-vis* an explanatory (associationist) psychology that fragmented this unity with concepts that were themselves "violently" abstracted from this unity. The aim of descriptive psychology, according to Dilthey, is to present "the elements and relationships of psychic experience that manifest themselves uniformly," that are not

27. *Ibid.*, p. xviii.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.
29. Cf. Carlo Antoni, *From History to Sociology* (London: Merlin Press, 1962), pp. 30ff; György Lukács, *Az ész tronfosztása* [*Die Zerstörung der Vernunft*], 2nd ed. (Budapest: Akademiai kiadó, 1965), pp. 336ff. and cf. the various typologies of *Weltanschauungen* in volumes V and VIII of Dilthey's *Ges. Schr.*
30. Antoni, *From History to Sociology, op.cit.*, p. 11.
31. Cf. Reidel, "Einleitung," *op.cit.*, p. 38.

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constructed or brought in from the outside but are experienced [*erlebt*].[32]

Let us recall the touchstone of Dilthey's critique of positivism. He believed that the naturalization of the social and historical sciences, and of psychology, separates these forms of knowledge from its proper object, human life. The new foundation that he prepared for the *Geisteswissenschaften* sought to transcend this separation from the outset, beginning with the unity of subject-object in the unit of immediate experience, the *Erlebnis*, in which there is no distinction between observer and observed, apprehension and apprehended. According to Dilthey, the inner preception, awareness of lived experience reveals a unity of mental life that can never be made clear to explanatory understanding. Furthermore, the unity of self holds together all inner processes and yields the unity of life.[33] But how does the primordial subject-object unity of the *Erlebnis* transcend the subject-object division of the historical world: how does the unity of the self, the living totality of our consciousness, yield the unity of life, the totality of the historical world? A philosophy of life that is no longer afraid of its own irrationalist consequences would give the answer that the unity of the subject and object in the intuitable but non-intelligible *Erlebnis* ultimately rests on the inexplicable unity of life. Dilthey was not ready to give this answer explicitly, even if a *Lebensphilosophie* was at the horizon of his thought. We experience the overall connection of life only by bits and pieces, he argued: only through individual *Erlebnisse*.[34] But in this case the new psychology remains just as abstract *vis-à-vis* history as the old; the trouble with explanatory psychology was not only its hypothetical constructionism but also its individualism, which is shared by Dilthey's descriptive psychology, since it could not liberate itself from the internal experiences of the self as its starting point.[35]

Dilthey hoped to solve the dilemma of his individualism by his concept of *Verstehen*. But the concept only internalizes the problem, without solving it. According to Dilthey, the difference between the *Erklären* (explanation) and

32. Dilthey, *Ges. Schr.*, V, *op.cit.*, p. 152.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 170.
34. Dilthey, *Ges. Schr.* V, *op.cit.*, p. 171.
35. Cf. Max Horkheimer, "Psychologie und Soziologie im Werk Wilhelm Diltheys" in *Kritische Theorie der Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Marxismus-Kollektiv, 1968), p. 283; Lukács, *Az ész tronsfosztása, op.cit.*, pp. 328-329. Once again Riedel (*op.cit.*, p. 38) can give, on the basis of the "Breslauer Ausarbeitung" a different interpretation here. He interprets the *Erlebnis* not as a subjectivist (in the individual sense), psychological concept, but as an intersubjective, transcendental concept from which the whole range of human experience can be constituted. I do not quarrel with this interpretation of Dilthey *per se*. But a few remarks are in order: (1) Dilthey's polemics with the neo-Kantians seem to show that Dilthey's self-understanding and the way he was understood by his contemporaries is nearer to the psychologistic model. (2) The first definition of *Verstehen* by Dilthey was introspectionist and individualistic. (3) Without his later concept of objective spirit, even a transcendental-logical concept of *Erlebnis* would explain little about history. It is furthermore possible for even an intersubjectively conceived subject to be confronted with an impenetrable, meaningless and estranged object.

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the *Verstehen* (understanding) of ourselves *and* others is that the former involves only intellectualistic processes, while the latter involves the whole of our psychological powers. *Verstehen* has its foundation in the immediately given *Erlebnis*. *Verstehen* begins with "the *system* of the whole, that is given to us as a living reality" to interpret the particulars.[36] This is how we know others to be *subjects* like ourselves; i.e., we begin with the whole of *our* psychic life and reconstruct, re-experience *in time* the wholes of their psychic lives (albeit always in a telescoped, simplified and only structurally "accurate" way).[37] As psychical wholes ourselves, we relive the developmental process of the experiences of other minds, on the basis of external signs, and expressions of their inner life.

However, Dilthey does warn us against a completely introspectionist interpretation of *Verstehen*. "What man is, he experiences not by brooding over himself, or by psychological experiments, but through history."[38] In this context, Dilthey was already playing with the Hegelian concept of objective spirit that was eventually to help him out of some his troubles. But to the extent he was seeking a psychological (individualistic) foundation of subject-object unity, the meaning of the overall historical process was beyond his reach. The concept of empathetic *Verstehen* contains the antinomy of individual and history. To guarantee the possibility of the *Verstehen* of others Dilthey had to seek ahistorical solutions (by the way of postulates that could be interpreted either anthropologically or in terms of a *Lebensphilosophie*). He believed that human nature is always fundamentally the same, and that the elementary components of mental life are always common. Furthermore each expression, sign of mental life, is tied to one such common element.[39] Dilthey, ultimately, assigned psychology (or anthropology) the task to reconstruct "human nature in general," an operation based on the above procedure of individualistic *Verstehen*. But at the same time this was to be the source of the fruitfulness of the "interpretation" of history, hermeneutics, itself only an expanded system of the understanding of signs. He was aware of the circularity here and called it the "hermeneutic circle," presumably not vicious because of the fundamental unity of life. This solution Dilthey never really liked. Yet, the interpretation of signs finally projected him toward taking the objective historical process more seriously for the foundation of the social and historical sciences. He had a tendency to interpret hermeneutics itself individualistically, as exemplified by a certain "gnostic" or "aristocratic" approach toward the deciphering of signs. There is always an element of genius in interpretation,[40] he says; and indeed there would have to be if the

36. Dilthey, *Ges. Schr.* V, *op.cit.*, p. 172.
37. Hodges, *The Philosophy of Dilthey*, *op.cit.*, p. 122.
38. Dilthey, *Ges. Schr.* V, *op.cit.*, p. 180.
39. Dilthey, *Ges. Schr.* I, *op.cit.*, p. 32; V, *op.cit.*, p. 172; Hodges, *The Philosophy of Dilthey*, *op.cit.*, p. 133.
40. Dilthey, *Ges. Schr.* V, *op.cit.*, p. 278.

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existence of others were given *only* from without, through signs, gestures, sounds and actions.[41] Yet, Dilthey is already on the verge of the solution when he argues that historical consciousness based on the understanding of other persons implies that modern man has present in himself the entire past of humanity. But he would have had to reverse the two parts of the statement, and argue that our participation in a common history and common historical products (language, institutions, material products—i.e. objectifications, objective spirit) is *the basis* of the understanding of other persons. This reversal, however, would have implied the abandonment of Dilthey's attempt to create a psychological foundation for the *Geisteswissenschaften*. He was ready for this only (and never completely) after 1905.

III

The Heidelberg (Baden) neo-Kantian critique of positivism was less ambitious than Dilthey's. Windelbrand, Rickert and their followers took a torn, dualistic world as a given, and where ultimately looking for the transcendental conditions of the possibility of this world. Their notion of transcendental constitution was radically non-positivistic, but one of the results of the way they constituted the world was the implicit validation of positivism in its approach to the study of nature, and indeed of reality *qua* nature: reality as constituted by the will to objective truth. Dilthey, on the other hand, was always suspicious of the natural sciences even with respect to their own sphere, eventually arguing that their constructive-hypothetical "laws" and "truths" were only in the service of the control of the physical world.[42] Nevertheless, the neo-Kantians attacked Dilthey precisely because his definition of the *Geisteswissenschaften* opened the door to positivism. In 1894 Windelband argued in his famous Strassburg rectoral address, "Geschichte und Naturwissenschaft"[43] that the attempt to ground history in any psychology, was to naturalize history. Even a psychology that describes internal experiences must use the methods of natural sciences to be able to make statements that supposedly clarify historical problems, i.e. problems that lie outside the limits of the empirical subject that is described. We must grant the persuasiveness of Windelband's argument, even though it came before Dilthey's attempts to solve this very problem by the concept of empathetic *Verstehen*. The concept of *Verstehen* (and even his most sophisticated later attempts to define this concept in terms of

41. Dilthey, *Die Entstehung der Hermeneutik* in *Ges. Schr.* V, *op.cit.*, p. 318. It is a mistake to rigidly juxtapose Dilthey's romanticism and psychologism to one another (cf. Hodges, *op.cit.*). Here, e.g., a romantic notion of genius reinforced his individualistic psychology, and, on the other hand, one of the aims of Dilthey's "new" psychology was to explain "genius."

42. Dilthey, *Ges. Schr.* VII, *op.cit.*, p. 82f.

43. Reprinted in Windelband, *Praludien* (3rd ed., Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1907).

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objectification) never liberated Dilthey from the need to construct a general typology of human nature as a canon of the interpretation of historical individuality. For Windelband the subsumption of the individual by the general was precisely the method of "nomothetic" natural science. On the other hand, he argued, history, to be independent of naturalization, must see itself as what it is, i.e. the "idiographic", individualizing science of the unique, of the "valuable". To be fair to Dilthey, the distinction between description of individuals and the generalization of laws never escaped him. Nor did the fact that in history (unlike the natural sciences) the interpreter must confront values. But he did not rigidly exclude generalization and not explicitly value-related procedures from the *Geisteswissenschaften*.[44] Thus, for Windelband, Dilthey's whole distinction of *Naturwissenschaften* and *Geisteswissenschaften* rested on the mere contentual distinction of internal, mental, psychic phenomena and externa, natural phenomena. But it was the *method* of the natural sciences that most seriously invaded historiography, and psychic facts were quite exposed to this method. Windelband's formal, methodological differentiation between generalizing and individualizing sciences was supposedly going to protect history.

Criticisms of Windelband's views on history are no longer even interesting. One immediate result of his argument was that it codified the division of the scientific world between specialists and naturalistic theoreticians, that Dilthey chose to attack. At best, from the point of view of historiography, Windelband represented, as Collingwood puts it, "a kind of secessionist movement of historians from the general body of a civilization in the thrall to natural science."[45] The theoretical foundations of Windelband's views are far more interesting—especially because of the influential systematization of these foundations by Heinrich Rickert and their historicization by Max Weber.

We have already mentioned that Dilthey insisted on the substitution of the immediately given, whole "empirical" subject for the Kantians' purely intellectual, transcendental subject (consciousness as such). Ultimately, this was the great theoretical difference between him, Windelband and Rickert. For the neo-Kantians the transcendental constitution of the world was the only focus from which positivism and naturalism could be attacked. But the Baden neo-Kantians interpreted this transcendental constitution differently than Kant or the Marburg neo-Kantians. For Windelband and Rickert the basis of transcendental constitution is the transcendent world of values, the sphere of the "Ought." In Windelband, "consciousness as such" becomes "normative consciousness."[46] Kant's "practical reason," and indeed the categorical

44. Dilthey, *Ges. Schr.* I, *op.cit.*, pp. 37-38.

45. R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History, op.cit.*, p. 167. For a more systematic treatment of Windelband cf. the unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (Yale, 1965) by Thomas Willey, *Back to Kant. The Revival of Kantian Idealism in Germany.*

46. Willey, *Back to Kant, op.cit.*, pp. 108ff.

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imperative, is placed in the center of thought: "we must not only act so that our action can become a generally acceptable norm, we must also *so* judge."[47] Windelband was fully conscious that Kant's attempts to define on the level of empirical reality what norms are generally acceptable, i.e., to grant values an empirical reality, resulted only in totally abstract and formal solutions. In empirical reality what is deemed valuable shows infinite variation. On the other hand, to deduce values from psychical and historical constellations leads to a dangerous value relativism that would justify those "values" which can be enforced, or no values at all.[48] If we approach *values* with a natural scientific mode of explanation that knows only the empirical subject, this danger becomes unavoidable. But, fortunately, natural science itself is constituted transcendentally (as in Kant) on the bases of value (this is new in the Baden neo-Kantians, or rather can be traced to Fichte). Thus, Windelband feels justified to postulate a sphere of transcendent values, the sphere of validity as opposed to the sphere of existence, the Ought [*Sollen*] as opposed to Being [*Sein*]. Given this "theory of two worlds," Windelband makes the task of philosophy quite explicit, i.e., to uncover the universally valid values from the chaos of individual and general values, to uncover values that are *necessarily* valid (only) for a "normative consciousness." These values would constitute the spheres of philosophy, logic, ethics and aesthetics, and within logic the validity of empirical truth (the bases of the natural sciences and the empirical ego) is constituted. Philosophy is happy to contemplate the fragmented world, and does not strive for the synthesis of totality.[49] Furthermore, the problem of how the "normative consciousness" itself is constituted is never posed by Windelband (or Rickert for that matter). As a result, the theory of absolute values was remarkably open to criticisms. Schlick's neo-positivist critique was devastating, except that Schlick's own solution of the problem of values swayed between the empirical derivation of values from whatever is established on the one hand, and from a "good human nature" on the other.[50] Dilthey's historicist critique refused to admit that we can look for values, absolute or relative, outside of history. Yet, Dilthey argued that within history there are plenty of examples of positing absolute values,[51] and while they could never be universally validated in the formal sense, the act of positing them is a dimension of future directed praxis.[52] In the context of his notion of objectification,

47. Cf. Mihaly Vajda, *A mitosz és a racio hataran* ("On the Borderline between Myth and Reason") (Budapest: Gondolat, 1969), p. 189.

48. Cf. Agnes Heller, "Hipotezis egy Marxista ertekelmelethez," *Magyar Filozofiai Szemle* V (Budapest, 1970), pp. 762-763. English translation: "Towards a Marxist Theory of Value," *Kinesis* vol. V, no. 1 (Fall, 1972).

49. Cf. Vajda, *A motisz es a racio hataran, op.cit.*, p. 31; and especially Heinrich Levy, *Die Hegel Renaissance in der Deutschen Philosophie. Mit Besonderen Berucksichtigung des Neukantianismus* (Charlottenburg: Pan-Verlag Rolf Heise, 1927), pp. 60-61.

50. Heller, "Hipotezis...," *op.cit.*, p. 762.

51. W. Dilthey, *Der Aufbau der geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften* [1910] in *Ges. Schr.* VII, *op.cit.*, p. 173.

52. W. Dilthey, *Plan der Fortsetzung der Aufbau der geschichtlichen Welt in den*

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Dilthey had important things to say on the value problem. Unfortunately, he never completely gave up the attempt to deduce absolute values from his anthropological types and even from his concept of life.[53] In any case, the Baden neo-Kantians did not consider these criticisms too damanging, especially because their major point was still unanswered, i.e., that the empirical derivation of values from the psyche, from history or from anything else results in the destruction of all moral philosophy, in justifying all that exists or in justifying nothing. In the context of a generally felt cultural disintegration, this was a strong argument. Rickert believed that on the basis of this insight and a higher level of rigorous systematization the Baden *Weltanschauung* could still triumph over its many critics.

Rickert's influential synthesis takes off from Windelband's dualistic two worlds theory, and we can disregard the fact that the late Windelband made some hesitant attempts of his own toward more totalizing directions.[54] Rickert interprets the primacy of the practical far more rigorously than Windelband, and the result is the "purification" of the concept of the transcendental subject from all empirical elements and the constitution of the empirical world through one value recognized by this subject, the value of objective truth.[55] Within the world constituted by this value the dualistic and "naïve realist" relationship of the empirical subject to his "external" world is initially maintained, and the point of view of the natural sciences remains wholly valid, although subordinated to transcendental philosophy. Rickert's problems with the method of the natural sciences concern us only peripherally here. As in the case of Dilthey, Rickert's sophistication lay elsewhere. As a follower of Kant, he was concerned not to deny the validity, within a range defined by transcendental philosophy, of the concepts of the existing natural sciences. Yet, his concept of "reality" developed in defense of the historical sciences tended to make the natural scientific concepts more and more distant from reality, more and more abstract and even fictional.[56] Sensing the inadequacy of both Windelband's merely formal distinction between nomothetic and idiographic sciences and his uncompromising dualism, Rickert began to postulate a "third realm" of the world that would contain both value and fact, that could provide the bases for a material as well as formal distinction between the *Kulturwissenschaften* (suspicious of Dilthey's psychologism, he refused to call the historical and social sciences

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Geisteswissenschaften in *Ges. Schr.* VII, *op.cit.*, p. 289.

53. Cf. Hodges, *The Philosophy of W. Dilthey*, *op.cit.*, pp. 80-82; Heller, "Hipotezis," *op.cit.*, p. 765.

54. Levy, *Die Hegel Renaissance, op.cit.*, pp. 62ff. Our procedure seems justified because even in his last work Windelband tended to restate rigid versions of his dualistic views. Cf. *Einleitung in die Philosophie* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1914), p. 422.

55. Heinrich Rickert, *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis. Einführung in die Transzendentalphilosophie* (2nd ed., Tübingen and Leipzig: J.C.B. Mohr, 1904), pp. 24-25; p. 115.

56. For a short but dramatically to the point critique (1910) of the rival school of neo-Kantianism that was more sophisticated concerning the natural sciences, cf. Ernst Cassirer, *Substance and Function* (Chicago: Open Court, 1923), pp. 221ff.

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Geisteswissenschaften) and *Naturwissenschaften*.[57] But as soon as Rickert postulated this "third realm" which eventually became for him the only source for the study of absolute values,[58] he felt compelled to challenge the natural sciences, to which he first assigned the realm of empirical truth. His most famous work, *Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung* (1896-1902) is the most systematic statement of this challenge.[59] In this context, however, Rickert is forced to reveal a premiss (or rather a shift in his transcendental point of view) that tacitly ties him to irrationalistic and intuitionist *Lebensphilosophie*.[60] He argues that within our immediate experience reality is "irrational" because it is a "heterogeneous continuum" that cannot be fully grasped by any rational concept. Any copy theory of knowledge (naïve realism) is therefore totally absurd. There are never any sharp or absolute boundaries in immediate reality, hence it is continuous. There are no two individual facts that are totally identical, hence reality is completely heterogeneous.[61] Transcendental constitution can take two fundamental directions *vis-à-vis* this "heterogeneous continuum." It can try to constitute it into a homogeneous continuum, or into a heterogeneous discretum. The former (the constitution of a homogeneous continuum) is the procedure of mathematics, which is however completely ideal *vis-à-vis* immediate experience. The latter (the constitution of a heterogeneous discretum) is therefore the only alternative for any science of empirical reality. In both cases rationality is transcendentally constructed from an irrational flux—the irrational heterogeneous continuum is only intuitable, yet it is more *real* than the constituted objects of the various sciences. But the concepts of the natural sciences have a tendency to be even more separate from reality than the concepts of history. If they are not to fall into pure mathematical construction they must confront the heterogeneity of their data. But since their generalizing concepts can represent this heterogeneity only abstractly, the natural sciences become more and more distant from individualized reality, the ultimate limit of this distancing being pure mathematics.[62] The conclusion of this line of reasoning is that the historical sciences are closer to the only empirical reality that can be constituted, because their individualizing method is more adequate to the

57. Levy, *Die Hegel Renaissance, op.cit.*, p. 67.

58. In *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis* (1892) and in the first edition of *Kulturwissenschaft und Naturwissenschaft*, Rickert hoped to deduce values as such *a priori* from the structure of practical reason. In his later works he gave up this project and attempted to "decipher" values from the realizations of values in cultural history. Nevertheless, he continued to consider *validity* of values independent of these realizations. We shall consider some of the problems of this conception below. Cf. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests, op.cit.*, p. 340.

59. Here we will only consider later editions of *Kulturwissenschaft und Naturwissenschaft*, which codified and popularized the theory of *Die Grenzen*. Cf. translation of sixth edition (same as second, 1910) by George Reisman (New York, 1962).

60. Cf. Cassirer, *Substance and Function, op.cit.*, p. 221; Heller, "Hypotezis," *op.cit.*, p. 763; Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests, op.cit.*, p. 339.

61. Rickert, *Science and History, op.cit.*, pp. 33-34.

62. *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

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"heterogeneous discretum" than the method of the natural sciences. However, the standard of "closeness to reality" remains hazy in this context, because the existence of the heterogeneous continuum is only extrapolated by philosophy from everyday life and it is hard to see how such a concept can become the criterion of scientific adequacy. In any case, this is where Rickert gets close to Bergson and other anti-intellectualistic philosophers of life, in spite of himself. This meant the abandonment of his transcendental viewpoint, for an instant. And we can easily understand why he did this. From the point of view of transcendental constitution he was forced to admit the claim of naïve realism and of the natural sciences *vis-à-vis* empirical consciousness. But *when empirical consciousness enters history* naïve realism and naturalism tend to become destructive of the historical experience, that according to Rickert's criteria involves activity according to valued ends. Thus, Rickert attacks the claims of natural science even within the transcendental realm of empirical fact originally assigned to it. But given the implicit problem that historical reality is constituted not only by historians but by historical actors, he was forced to adopt a non-transcendental point of view here, which involved pre-linguistic intuition and philosophic extrapolation of a realm that Kant would have described *das Ding an Sich*, i.e., the irrational, so-called "heterogeneous continuum."

Thus, Rickert's intention is clearer than his procedure. He is once again attempting to establish the autonomy of the historical sciences. He asks what aspect of individualized reality does the natural scientific method violate, and the answer is: value related meaningful individuality. We have already mentioned that he constitutes a "third realm" of the world that contains immanent meanings and valued objects. This realm turns out to be "culture," the transcendentally constituted object of the historical sciences of culture, formally defined by an individualizing method and materially defined by an orientation toward values. "Culture...comprises whatever is either produced directly by men acting according to valued ends or, if it is already in existence, whatever is *fostered* intentionally for the sake of the *values* attached to it."[63] Cultural objects have values attached to them, they are "valuable entities," "goods," but they are not values as such, which are only given to the transcendental subject. Goods are the "realization" (always incomplete) of values in the world. Every cultural phenomenon, every "good" could also be regarded as a part of nature, if we abstracted its value dimension. Thus "relevance to values" is the criterion of distinguishing between cultural objects and natural objects. This value relevance determines the uniqueness of historical objects and is the material justification of Windelband's individualizing method.[64] We should notice

63. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

64. Rickert's double distinction gives his position far more flexibility than Windelband's position had. For example, he can locate two intermediate areas between individualizing plus value oriented, and generalizing plus non-value oriented science. There are thus individualizing

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that Rickert is attempting to combine Windelband's and, with some modifications, Dilthey's points of view on the definition and delimitation of the historical and social sciences. He revives Dilthey's concepts of *Verstehen, Bedeutung* and *Nacherleben* but he gives the first two concepts a strongly non-psychologistic interpretation. Meaning is not an externalized part of an experience that expresses the whole of that experience: it is the dimension of objects that can be related to values. *Verstehen* is the act of relating to values; it refers neither to the experience [*Erlebnis*] of the subject that creates the object nor to the re-experiencing [*nacherlebnis*] of the subject that relates to the object, but to the transcendental act of the constitution of a cultural object.[65] *Erlebnis* and *Nacherlebnis* are interpreted by Rickert purely psychologically (not as much in the sense of a naturalist psychology as Rickert's own notion of a historical psychology that refers to the development of the psyche of the empirical subject); they can provide only the natural material for the constitution of cultural objects; they are not aspects of *Verstehen* but necessary empirical operations prior to *Verstehen*, the transcendental constitution of "meaning."[66]

Thus, Rickert hoped to constitute the object of the historical sciences of culture without falling into psychologism. But he purchased this success at the cost of having to introduce a whole set of new antinomies into his theory. The first of these is the distinction between value-judgment and value-relation. Let us recall the Baden neo-Kantian thesis of the primacy of the practical. This originally implied, *vis-à-vis* science, that the norm, the value of objective truth constituted the object of the scientific disciplines, i.e., empirical reality. But now this empirical reality is to be further distinguished into nature and culture. As in Kant, nature is constituted under general laws according to the categories of the understanding. Culture is to be constituted (and this is new with the Baden school) according to the relation of facts to meaning, complexes of meanings, i.e., according to "value-relation." But this theoretical relating to values is not the same as value-judgment and valuation which are practical acts. One such act (the practical act of philosophy) constitutes science, while science itself remains purely theoretical and contemplative. Thus, value-judgments have no place inside science, and value-relation must be concretely distinguished from value-judgment. Rickert establishes the difference by a sharp distinction between historian and historical actor. Cultural "goods" are constituted by "valuating" (value realizing, value positing) actions of

and non-value oriented (e.g., geology) and generalizing and value-related (e.g., economics). Rickert is not proposing *four* distinct areas as much as two poles with a flexible region between them. Cf. *Science and History, op.cit.*, p. 104ff.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 65. Rickert's concept of *Verstehen* cannot play the role Dilthey (especially the late Dilthey) assigned to it, i.e., expressing the fact that general expressions can grasp the individual and unrepeatable. This function Rickert tries to fulfill by (1) distinguishing between two levels of concepts, one scientifically general, the other general in the sense that all nouns are general, and by (2) his category of value which is general only in the second sense.

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historical actors. The historian, guided by orientation or relation to values, does not posit values himself. He treats values "only in so far as they are *actually* accepted by subjects [historical actors] so that certain objects are actually denoted as goods."[67] The historical actor evaluates according to "what ought to be:" the historian even in relation to values "establishes only what is." But this distinction between historian and historical actor cannot sharply define the notion of value-relation.

Rickert cannot consistently disregard the historian as a subject himself in a historical, cultural situation. He cannot permit the historian to "arbitrarily relate the objects of his investigation to any values whatever,"[68] i.e., to his personal values. Presumably, such individualism can be permitted only to the philosopher who self-consciously *judges* values from the transcendental point of view. The historian, on the other hand, must relate the object of cultural scientific investigation to values meaningful to his cultural peers. But the contemporary interest that makes a *value* meaningful cannot be simply defined as contemplative. Politicians, for instance, tend to read political history, artists the history of art. But even assuming that the contemplative definition of value relation can be defended, the transcendental constitution of cultural objects breaks down on the side of the historical actor. The historical actor does not merely determine the possible conditions of the constitution of cultural objects. Even according to Rickert's presentation, he actively creates them. Goods are products of value oriented historical action. The analogy with the transcendental constitution of nature breaks down in the case of culture, because the transcendental, constitutive subjectivity cannot be restricted to the theorist. The historical actor actively (and empirically) externalizes what Rickert would call transcendental subjectivity,[69] and this is the source of the creation of those intersubjective meanings from which history can be intersubjectively deciphered. The problem of Rickert is that he poses a Hegelian problem, but fails "to complete the transition from Kant to Hegel."[70]

We should not be surprised that Rickert never followed the late Dilthey, in adopting the Hegelian conceptual apparatus of "Objective Spirit" and "objectification," for the solution of the problem of historical knowledge. The validation of historical knowledge against the danger of naturalization

67. *Ibid.*, pp. 88-89.

68. *Ibid.*, p. 97.

69. The historical actor's creative externalization of transcendental subjectivity makes it impossible to treat him as "mere" nature (physiologically and psychologically) "causing" a change in his object. Self-reflection, self-positing, self-transformation enter into "causality" in the historical context. Yet, Rickert claimed that all objects could be constituted as nature if we abstract from the value dimension. This would mean, e.g., that the battle of Waterloo, or the *Critique of Pure Reason* could be interpreted as "natural" events. This notion represented a serious concession to positivism. No one has ever succeeded in reducing any historical event to physics or biology.

70. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests, op.cit.*, p. 340, n. 40. This remarkable footnote to a chapter on Dilthey was extremely helpful in the above interpretation of Rickert.

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was not Rickert's only concern. Of all the famous neo-Kantians, Rickert was perhaps the most anxious to fashion a speculative, idealist world view that could withstand the onslaught of the positivistic fragmentation of knowledge, but also that of historicist skepticism.[71] When he was forced to abandon the *a priori* deduction of values, he began to look for the absolute in history: "Philosophy can hope to approach the *suprahistorical* solely by way of the historical."[72] As a result, he tried to hold onto the point of view of the transcendental constitution of culture, even as he began to assign value-realization to empirical subjects. If philosophy could not posit absolute values at the beginning of historical investigation, at least it could hold onto the *telos*, to the regulative principle of absolute values as the goal of investigation. Furthermore, no one around the turn of the century, not even the late Dilthey, had confidence in the orthodox Hegelian solution of the problem of the absolute, in the dialectical transition from objective spirit to the (historical) forms of the self-reflection of the spirit, i.e., absolute spirit (religion, art and philosophy). Thus, Rickert feared that the adaptation of the concept of objective spirit would mean that the *telos* of philosophy, the absolute validities that stand in the way of the destruction of reason, would be *reduced* (as in the late Dilthey) to an immanent product of the unfolding of this objective spirit. But, as a result, Rickert was unable to conceptualize the dynamic of the social, historical world: he had to recognize empirical, historical subjectivity to be able to speak of cultural objects, "goods" at all, but from the point of view of transcendental constitution he had to treat this subjectivity in a static, and merely descriptive sense. All his concessions to the positivism of the special sciences flow from this problem, and (as we have shown) only through concessions to irrationalist *Lebensphilosophie* could he avoid the naturalization of the historical world. Max Weber and Emil Lask, both of whom were Rickert's philosophic disciples, begin their methodological researches with this problematic and attempt a solution at its opposite poles. Lask (believing that the resolution of the dualism of the Absolute and of History could come only through the Hegelian dialectic that he strongly rejected) sought to ground the Absolute in an explicitly Platonizing *Grundphilosophie*. On the other hand, Max Weber, disregarding (but not discarding) the problem of the Absolute, attempted to historicize Rickert's conception of the transcendental constitution of the social historical world.

IV

Emil Lask and Max Weber belonged to the second generation of the Baden school of neo-Kantianism. They inherited a philosophic perspective characterized by a transcendental-empirical ambiguity that was the source

71. Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins, op.cit.*, p. 335.
72. Rickert, *Science and History, op.cit.*, p. 144.

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of deep problems both on the level of the foundation of a theory of values and of a new basis for the "historical sciences of culture." Around 1905 Lask's and Weber's intellectual positions were quite parallel: on the basis of Rickert's two worlds theory Lask attempted to work out a philosophy of the science of law, and Weber tried to do the same for the methodology of the social sciences. Yet, they were to move in opposite directions: Weber toward the historicization of an increasingly ahistorical two-worlds theory and Lask toward the creation of a Platonizing metaphysics as the foundation of the two-world theory.

Lask himself began his contribution to neo-Kantian theory with a contribution to the problem of history. Unlike most of his contemporaries, Lask was remarkably conscious that a dialectical theory of history, i.e., the philosophy of Hegel, represented a concrete philosophical alternative to neo-Kantianism. In his dissertation on Fichte (1902) he wrote: "Even the critical philosopher [i.e., the Kantian] must admit that Hegel was right: if dialectically [self]moving concepts existed, *then and only then* could there be an overcoming of irrationality... But the critical philosopher denies the precondition of the premiss, i.e., concepts in Hegel's sense."[73] The above is one of the major themes of Lask's dissertation, and the problem of the dialectic always remained at the horizon of his thought.[74] Lask was certain that Hegel could not be treated as a "dead dog." He recognized that Windelband's and Rickert's value theory implicitly accepted some of Hegel's criticisms of Kantian moral philosophy. For Kant values, "the ought," could not be *incompletely* realized. As a result, his moral philosophy led to incredibly abstract conclusions, and ultimately could not say anything about moral conduct in the historical world. Lask saw that the value theory of Windelband and Rickert had both a Kantian moment (insistence on the "validity" of completely general norms) and a Hegelian moment (admitting incomplete value realization in the world). Thus, Hegel's important contribution to a theory of value was his conception of the concrete, individual, unique value, even if he did not always recognize a rupture between such values and their incomplete realizations in the world.[75] However, according to Lask, Hegel's fruitful insight had to be "freed" from his theory of the concept, from his "emanatistic" logic, or rather Hegel's notions of value had to be based on the foundation of an analytic transcendental logic.

A second major theme of Lask's dissertation was the problem of irrationality. He believed that this problem was somehow the motor of the history of the rationalist philosophy, because of a whole series of attempts to subsume the irrationality of the empirical under rational concepts, forms,

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73. Emil Lask, *Fichtes Idealismus und die Geschichte* in his *Gesammelte Schriften* I, ed. by E. Herrigel (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1923), p. 72.

74. Jonas Cohn, another neo-Kantian, wrote: "all artificialities in the thought of Lask can be understood in terms of an escape from dialectics." Quoted by H. Levy, *Die Hegel Renaissance, op.cit.*, p. 76.

75. Lask, *Ges. Schr.* I, *op.cit.*, pp. 17-18.

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categories. In Kant, the concept of the *thing in itself* typified the resistance of the irrational, in Fichte the resistance of the empirical ego to the absolute ego.[76] For Lask, both Kant (and the Kantians) and Hegel recognized and theoretically incorporated the problem of irrationality, with one major difference. Kant believed that from the point of view of transcendental self-reflection irrationality was *an* ultimate condition of all knowledge while Hegel hoped to overcome irrationality in a grand, speculative theory. Lask calls this theory Hegel's emanatistic logic (or "panlogism"), meaning the subsumption of the irrational in the unfolding of a progressively enriched self-moving "concept." Emanatistic logic, as opposed to analytic logic in which only atomized individual elements can be considered real, is a logic of dialectically developing wholes subsuming all individuals. Emanatistic logic knows no difference between form and content.[77] Hegel's logic, Lask admits, indeed subsumed the motionless under motion, incorporated the isolated in a developmental totality, and traced substance becoming subject. However, according to Lask, in spite of steps that contributed a great deal to a concrete philosophy of culture, Hegel's ultimate synthesis, his ultimate overcoming of irrationality in an "absolute Rationalism," was totally abstract and speculative.[78] Lask shows that the Hegelian notions of abstract and concrete (or concrete concept) imply that the more general, if it incorporates all the steps that lead to it, is the more concrete. But this means, according to Lask, that the unfolding of the logical concept cannot solve the problem of subsuming *all* that is irrational unless logic turns into a speculative metaphysics—a theory of all of existence and not merely a theory of the "concept." To Lask, this return to speculative metaphysics reconnects Hegel to pre-Kantian, "dogmatic" rationalism.

Lask considered the ultimately speculative nature of dialectical logic in Hegel's system reason enough to reject dialectics altogether. He never considered the possibility of an open ended dialectic that would make the very real irrationalities of the given, a "task" for "praxis." But, in any case, he hoped to preserve one of the fruits of the Hegelian dialectic, the concretization of values in the cultural world.[79] His 1905 *Rechtsphilosophie*, which was orthodox Baden neo-Kantianism,[80] argues that Hegelianism has something really significant to contribute to legal philosophy "by rendering the system of ultimate social ends far more concrete." Unlike Rickert, Lask recognized the Hegelian dimension of the concept of "goods" and the great

76. Lask, *Ges. Schr.* I, *op.cit.*, pp. 133ff; pp. 137-138.

77. Lucien Goldmann, *Immanuel Kant*, trans. Robert Black (London: New Left Books, 1971), pp. 54-55.

78. Lask, *Ges. Schr.* I, *op.cit.*, pp. 64ff.

79. Indeed, Lask believed (in 1902, at least) that Rickert already preserved this gain on a transcendental foundation. And, the dissertation argued that Fichte already participated in the best of both worlds, partially concretizing the value problem but retaining the notion of transcendental constitution.

80. Cf. Emil Lask, *Legal Philosophy*, trans. by Kurt Wilk in *Legal Philosophies of Lask, Radbruch and Dabin* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950), pp. 4ff.

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importance of considering value realization in the context of communities (Hegel) and not isolated individuals (Kant). He continued to treat the Kantian and Hegelian positions on value as complementary (i.e., he spoke of the abstract value of personality realized in human communities).[81] But this special reliance on Hegel was to bring Lask up against his own neo-Kantian philosophical presuppositions. In a 1905 lecture on Hegel,[82] he slightly extended his previous stress on the concretization of value theory in the direction of a critique of the concept of *Sollen*. After defending Hegel against the common charge that he identified the rational with the politically established,[83] Lask showed how Hegel refused to completely identify "value" with "moral value," with the concept of "ought." For Hegel, an identification of value with the ought would have meant that in the world (containing good-evil, beautiful-ugly, true-false, etc.) there would be only a chaotic conflict of values, but no value realization. Value would remain purely negative, purely external to the world of culture.[84] To avoid this theoretical danger, according to Lask, for Hegel "value" becomes *Vernunft*, concretized value becomes *objektiver Geist*, both implying an immanent dimension of cultural history representing its meaning and perfection. Lask was ready to utilize this Hegelian critique of the concept of *Sollen*.

In a 1908 lecture Lask, in defense of the two worlds theory, attacked the notion of the primacy of the practical.[85] Hegel's critique of the *Sollen* was now utilized against not only Kant, but also the Baden neo-Kantians.[86] But this was merely preparatory for a step that was to move Lask decisively in an anti-Hegelian direction. Once again, Lask argued against an identification of value and moral value, of validity with the ought. He refused to admit that the validity of theoretical truth depends on an "ought" (on a categorical imperative). The good and the true are separate values with separate ranges of application. This allowed Lask to go further than Rickert even in purifying the transcendental subject of any empirical residues. The ethical subject could now be excluded from the transcendental subject which became a totally pure subject correlate of objective values.[87] In this context, Lask came close to Husserl, because the only meaning his new transcendental subject could have was "intentionality," i.e., the object constituting act itself without any "foreign" additions. Following Husserl, Lask was hypersensitive to psychologism, hence his attempt to exclude all traces of

81. Lask, *Legal Philosophy*, *op.cit.*, p. 15.
82. Emil Lask, "Hegel in seinem Verhältnis zur Weltanschauung der Aufklärung," in *Ges. Schr.* I, *op.cit.*, pp. 335ff.
83. Lask argued that since Hegel had a two worlds theory of the rational and the empirical, any conservative interpretation of his philosophy is mistaken.
84. Lask, *Ges. Schr.* I, *op.cit.*, pp. 339-340.
85. Emil Lask, "Gibt es einen Primat der praktischen Vernunft in der Logik?" *Ges. Schr.* I, *op.cit.*, pp. 349ff.
86. Lask, *Ges. Schr.* I, *op.cit.*, pp. 354-355.
87. Levy, *Die Hegel Renaissance*, *op.cit.*, p. 74.

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subjectivity from the sphere of validity.[88] Lask's last two published works, extremely technical and complicated, attempted to move even further in this direction, synthesizing phenomenology and neo-Kantianism, "concretizing" the philosophy of values in the direction of a *Grundphilosophie* of ultimate, primordial objectivities, beyond even the opposition of value-unvalue. This *Grundphilosophie* (it was presented only in its outlines) codified the impossibility of rationalist systembuilding, because of the ultimate impenetrability of matter. Form, for Lask, could totally envelop content, but could not ultimately penetrate it. The resistance of matter was the foundation of the irrationality that no transcendental point of view could overcome.[89] In *History and Class Consciousness*, Lukács was to make important use of some of these results of his friend's work in the direction of a dialectical social theory. Lask himself, however, in the last years of his life (he died in the first year of the war, in combat), increasingly tended toward a Platonizing metaphysics. Rejecting the deduction of validity from judgment he sought to ground all objectivity in a realm beyond judgment, beyond opposition. Judgment, according to Lask, presupposes the fragmentation of meaning, the complete separation of form from content, and therefore the possibility of negation and falsehood. The aim of judgment is to overcome this fragmentation (this possibility of the false), but fragmentation is built into its very structure. Judgment presupposes an unbridgeable dualism between its subject and its object, because judgment proceeds from the subject and cannot *ultimately* penetrate its object. From the point of view of the active subject, Lask argues, the *Urphänomena*, the *Urmaterial*, the *Urbilder*, i.e., pure validity, can never be uncovered, because the active subject must move in a realm of opposition.[90] But the postulate of totality, which is implied by even the vain efforts of the judging subject, requires a new concept of subjectivity, a purely contemplative and receptive concept. Only this subject is adequate to the highest theoretical level of validity, beyond all opposition.[91] Next to this level, even value-unvalue represent a lower level—a level where the judging subject remains primary. The postulate of the sphere of pure validity represents the primacy of the object, of pure objectivity.

Thus, Lask was moving to ground the two-worlds theory in a new theory that seemed to have the opposite philosophical presuppositions: the primacy of the object, and the primacy of the theoretical (contemplative). He learned from Hegel that the project of deducing suprahistorical, absolute values from the historical is impossible. He learned from his own historical-cultural milieu, as did Max Weber, that culture is the fragmented locus of value conflict, and he came to believe that absolute values can only be

88. Georg Lukács, "Emil Lask," *Kantstudien* XXII (Berlin, 1918), pp. 352-353.
89. Lukács, "Emil Lask," *op.cit.*, p. 365.
90. *Ibid.*, pp. 355ff; Levy, *Die Hegel Renaissance, op.cit.*, p. 75.
91. *Ibid.*, pp. 363ff; p. 365.

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grounded in the depth of theoretical reason. Lask used Hegel to reach radically non-Hegelian conclusions; he used historical critique to move toward a non-historical worldview. Max Weber—responding to some of the same problems and ambiguities of neo-Kantianism—moved in the opposite direction, toward turning the two-worlds theory into a historical theory of a fragmented, objectively meaningless and disenchanted world.

Max Weber's epistemological presuppositions were decisively but not unambiguously influenced by his friend and philosophical teacher, Rickert. In Weber's early methodological writings we confront an extremely dualistic version of the two-worlds theory. Yet, in the same writings and especially *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, he presents us with a clear awareness of the historicity of the modern science of culture that operates on the transcendental grounding of the neo-Kantian two-worlds theory. Rickert's difficulties in distinguishing between the constitutive activity of the historian and the creative activity of the historical actor within the orbit of "value-relevance" are thus brought to an ultimate climax by Weber, because he seems to insist with far greater vehemence than Rickert that (1) the values (among them the value of scientific truth) emerge only in the form of historical value—realizations (in conflict with one another), as historical "goods" created by historical actors and that (2) cultural meaning can constitute only the basis of the most arbitrary ("ideal-typical") constructive activity of historians. Furthermore Weber speaks about the past both as mere spectacle and as the constitution of the *Geist* of the present.[92] At times, he speaks about the culture of the past very much like Dilthey, and at other times he treats the culture of his own time in terms approximating Dilthey's conception of nature![93] His own theoretical self-misunderstanding as a mere specialist is the final form of this dualism: he restricts the possibility of theoretical knowledge to the specialist, even as he makes the *whole* of our social world the object of his investigation. Yet, between this final form of the dualism, and the rather orthodox neo-Kantian statements of the two worlds theory that are still found in his early methodological writings lies a magnificent attempt of historical thought to confront both the epistemological problems of neo-Kantianism and the "cultural crisis" of the modern world—the world of capitalism: in Weber's own terminology, the disenchanted world of *rationalization*.

In 1904 Weber wrote: "The fate of an epoch which has eaten of the tree of knowledge is that it must know that we cannot learn the *meaning* of world events from the results of its analysis, be it ever so perfect; it must

92. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "The Crisis of the Understanding," trans. N. Metzel and J. Flodstrom (from *Les aventures de la dialectique*) in *The Primacy of Perception* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964). Paradoxically, Merleau-Ponty and Karl Löwith constantly assign Hegelian type formulations to Weber without noticing their clash with his neo-Kantian formulations.

93. Compare, e.g., Weber's theory of ideal types with passages from Dilthey's *Ges. Schr.* VII, *op.cit.*, p. 90.

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rather be in a position to create this meaning itself. It must recognize that world views can never be products of the progress of the sciences of experience and that the highest ideals, which move us most forcefully, are always formed in the struggle with other ideals which are just as sacred to others are ours to us."[94] Many interpreters of Weber discern in this (and many similar) passages a sharp break with Rickert's philosophical framework. This break should not be exaggerated. Yet, Weber here is questioning the possibility of basing both cultural-scientific analysis and transcendental-philosophical reflection on value-realizations in the world, because there are no unambiguous value-realizations, meanings in *our* world! As a result, our highest values (among them the value of scientific truth) can only be the product of faith and choice, and they must struggle against other values. Furthermore, Weber is forced to give the concept of value-relation (which, following Rickert, he sharply distinguishes from valuation) a more unambiguously subjectivist interpretation than Rickert gave: we, the interpreters of history, must create all historical meanings. The whole theory of ideal types supports this interpretation of Weber. "The ideal typical construct has its foundation in a specific illusionless man who has been thrown back upon himself alone by a world become objectively meaningless and sober."[95] The ideal type should not, according to Weber, be confused with any actual aspect (essence, part, force, tendency, etc.) of reality. Reality is something like Rickert's "heterogeneous continuum," although Weber (perhaps conscious of the derivation of this concept only from intuitive everyday experience) refers only to the vast chaotic stream or infinite richness of an *in itself* irrational reality.[96] The "ideal-type" is an heuristic, conceptual (and rather arbitrary) construct that aims to "constitute" not the class or average character of phenomena, but the "unique individual character," the meaning, of cultural phenomena.[97] The ideal-type has nothing to do with value judgment, but it is indeed Weber's concretization of the notion of value-relation in the context of an objectively de-valued world. Thus, important dimensions of Rickert's thought are preserved in the theory of ideal types. Even the validity of absolute values is not dismissed outright, although these are assigned to faith. Absolute or ultimate values cannot be deciphered from a world characterized by the battle of the gods.

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94. Max Weber, "Die Objektivität sozialwissenschaftlicher und sozialpolitischer Erkenntnis" in *Gesammelte Aufsatze zur Wissenschaftslehre*, ed. J. Winckelmann (3rd ed., Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1968), p. 154. Cf. Max Weber, *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, trans. E.A. Shils and H.A. Finch (New York: Free Press, 1949), p. 57. [I have modified the translation.]

95. Karl Löwith, "Max Weber und Karl Marx," *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* LXVII (1932), p. 75. Löwith's Weber interpretation is heavly dependent on Lukacs' *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein*. Löwith makes Lukács' implicit Weber-Marx synthesis explicit and more justified, at least in terms of scholarly demonstration.

96. Weber, *Methodology, op.cit.*, p. 105; p. 111.

97. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

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Weber is certainly not unwilling to recognize the historicity of the specialized cultural sciences *consciously* based on ideal-types, and of the important types themselves.[98] His repetition of Rickert's dualistic definition of the historical as well as his main difference with Rickert must be sought in this fact. Weber's methodological writings give us only a few clues how he proceeds to establish this historicity. In the first instance, the concept of ideal type seems to methodologically negate the historicity of the spectacle it constructs.[99] However, Weber considered ideal typic analysis only a means toward (and not the whole of) historical analysis. He believed that the same problem complex can be, and must be, cut into from the points of view of several (at times opposing) ideal types. But the aim of this procedure is the imputation of the "adequate causation" of a unique cultural event, or rather the reconstruction of the "objective possibilities" of the unique cultural problem complex.[100] The adequate cause is comprised of all the elements (each formulated as ideal types: e.g., "Puritan ethic," "rational law," "modern science," "free labor," "bureaucratic state") which made the emergence of a unique cultural complex (also formulated as an ideal-type, e.g., "capitalism," "the spirit of capitalism," and ultimately Western rationality) objectively possible.[101] But the adequate cause is not yet a historical dynamic: the possibility of history is not yet its reality. Weber seeks this dynamic through his concept of "elective affinity" [*Wahlverwandschaft*]. He rejects the possibility, e.g., that "Western rationality" is a whole that develops through its special cases, e.g., Protestant ethic, rational law, etc., because these elements move in distinctly separate spheres: in their original form they are not even comparable.[102] Nevertheless, these elements are the givens whose interaction "establishes the rationality which each possesses in outline form," each "acquires its historical meaning only through its encounter with the others."[103] Weber does not allow the concept of "elective affinity" to turn objective possibility into objective necessity. He originally derived the category of objective possibility from theories of

98. *Ibid.*, p. 105; p. 110; cf. Löwith, "Max Weber und Karl Marx," *op.cit.*, p. 65.

99. Merleau-Ponty, "The Crisis of the Understanding," *op.cit.*, p. 194.

100. Weber, *Methodology, op.cit.*, pp. 92-93.

101. *Ibid.*, pp. 102-103, although the translation is misleading. Cf. Weber, *Wissenschaftslehre, op.cit.*, p. 204. Of course, Weber's most famous attempt in the direction of this kind of analysis, in the end surpassing his methodological restrictions, is *Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus* (1905). Cf. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. T. Parsons (New York: Scribner's, 1958), pp. 90–92.

102. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic, op.cit.*, pp. 75-78. This argument of Weber's, directed at Sombart, hardly takes care of the objection that once Western rationality is formed, it is an immense whole ("cosmos") based on the rational conduct of all aspects of life, that we confront. Cf. Löwith, "Max Weber und Karl Marx," *op.cit.*, p. 79. Nevertheless, I don't understand Löwith's argument if he means that Western Rationality is, for Weber, an original whole that is prior to all its elements. Weber rejects this notion in particular, and (following Lask) all arguments based on an emanatist, wholistic logic in general.

103. Cf. Merleau-Ponty, "The Crisis of the Understanding," *op.cit.*, p. 200. The form of rationality is in some sense common to all the elements, but it is by no means a primary characteristic of all or any of them.

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criminal law. Objective necessity has no place in criminal law, because it does not leave room for a dimension of subjective knowledge, foreknowledge and intention. But a criminal case must be ultimately judged on the basis of this subjective dimension. Thus, a case must be reinterpreted according to an objective dynamic that allows for more than one *possibility*, even if we know that only *one* of these was realized. In other words, a man can be punished for his subjective role in an event only if the event was influenced by this role. But this means that without that role other possible events could have taken place than the event that did take place.[104] Weber's adoption of this principle for the methodology of historical research, *implies a stress on subjectivity* as one of the necessary elements of historical causation. Weber interprets this creative subjectivity not in the sense of the ideas, motivations, actions, and *Lebensführung* of *individuals*, but in the sense of a conduct of life, the meanings and corresponding actions *"common to whole groups of men."*[105] Furthermore, it is difficult, on the basis of Weber's actual sociological work, not to interpret this subjectivity as more than just one element among several. In analyzing Weber, Merleau-Ponty speaks of human initiative founding "a system of life" from the various givens[106] and Löwith bases the "elective affinity" between religious ethic and economic rationality on a general "spirit" or "ethos" whose socially distinctive carrier is the western bourgeoisie.[107] On the other hand, and this is crucial, Weber's notion of historical subjectivity *does not* involve the full consciousness of the subject; for Weber human activity (even the activity of groups) tends to result in "unintended consequences." This last notion is the key both to his confrontation of his own social world and to his historicization of the neo-Kantian epistemological problematic.

In 1904-1905, Weber wrote the following of capitalism and its spirit: "The capitalistic economy of the present day is an immense cosmos into which the individual is born, and which presents itself to him, as far as he is an individual, as an unalterable order of things in which he must live."[108] And further: "At present under our individualistic political, legal, and economic institutions, with the forms of organization and general structure which are peculiar to our economic order, this spirit of capitalism might be understandable...purely as a result of adaptation...there can today no longer be any question of a necessary connection of that acquisitive maner of life with any single *Weltanschauung*. In fact, it no longer needs the support of any religious forces... But these are phenomena of a time which modern capitalism has become dominant and has become emancipated from its own supports."[109] And: "The Puritan wanted to work in calling;

104. Max Weber, "Critical Studies in the Logic of the Cultural Sciences" (1906) in *Methodology, op.cit.*, pp. 168-169.
105. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic, op.cit.*, pp. 54-55.
106. Merleau-Ponty, "The Crisis of the Understanding," *op.cit.*, p. 199.
107. Löwith, "Max Weber und Karl Marx," *op.cit.*, p. 80.
108. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic, op.cit.*, p. 54.
109. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

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we are forced to do so... [T]he modern economic order...is now bound to the technical and economic conditions of machine production which today determines the lives of all individuals who are born into this mechanism, not only those directly concerned with economic acquisition, with irresistible force.... Since asceticism undertook to remodel the world and to work out its ideal in the world, material goods have gained an increasing and finally inexorable power over the lives of men as at no previous period in history... [V]ictorious capitalism, since it rests on mechanical foundations, needs its [asceticism's] support no longer."[110] Weber makes no other point with greater force. His reader stands at one of those rare and powerful moments of intellectual history, when a crisis of epistemology is externalized in a theory of the whole social world. But this social theory reproduces the central antinomy of the epistemology. The immense cosmos of modern capitalism did not emerge without the mediation of an active, collective subjectivity. Yet, the unintended consequence of this emergence was the creation of a passive (merely adapting), individualized, subject. The maintenance of the mechanism of the fully rationalized modern economic order, "the inexorable power of material goods," no longer requires religious asceticism or any other single world view. Weber projects "an all encompassing mechanized petrification," the role of "specialists without spirit," as a *possible* outcome of this development, this tragedy of modern culture. Modern specialized science is already one of the results of the confrontation of the individual with the disenchanted world; to Weber it is (or rather, ought to be) the self-consciousness of this (at present rather hopeless) confrontation.

The concept of disenchantment is the transition between the world view of Protestant asceticism and the non-world view of the modern sciences. Inner worldly asceticism is inner worldly for the sake of transcendent ends. Weber interprets the "inner-worldliness" of Calvinism and the Protestant sects as the last stage (in itself a religious stage) of the elimination of magic from the world. The Puritans, e.g., removed all remnants of magic from Christianity. Furthermore, they devalued sensuous culture of all kinds. The unintended consequence of the Protestant ethic, the spirit of capitalism, completed this process of disenchantment: the success of the rationalization of all aspects of life deemphasized and discredited the original transcendent sanction of the rationalization of the conduct of life. The outcome was a completely sober, and objectively meaningless, valueless world: the world of empirical reality in the terminology of the neo-Kantians. This was Weber's historical derivation of the two-worlds theory of the neo-Kantians: as he eliminated the immanent values of the empirical world he made the task of value-relating science more and more constructive. This analysis also tended to destroy the possibility (in practice if not in principle) of Rickert's claim that the values ("the suprahistorical") can be discovered in their realizations

110. *Ibid.*, pp. 181-182.

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in the empirical world ("the historical"). There are indeed "value spheres" in the world for Weber, but these "gods" are in irreconcilable conflict with each other. There is no ground for value universalism in a disenchanted, "godless and prophetless" epoch. And the "conflict of the gods" applies not only to the highest values; the concept tends to apply to all values "realized" in the world, the result being, increasingly, a value individualism in the sense that personal value commitments can no longer be challenged by external (and especially "rational") standards. In Weber's works, the fragmentation (the particularization of subjectivity and of science that was always implicitly presupposed by Windelband and Rickert) was made an explicit historical product of rationalization and disenchantment.[111] Yet, as Weber made the split between the individual, value-relating, meaning-constructing subject of the specialized cultural sciences and the disenchanted, devalued, objectively meaningless cultural world a historical product, he implicitly (and unlike the earlier neo-Kantian) raised the problem of the overcoming of this world of the alienation of man. As a result Weber (again unlike Windelband and Rickert) was forced to confront Marx.

And we don't simply mean Marx as Weber (and almost everybody at the turn of the century) initially understood him, Marx as vulgar-Marxist.[112] Weber always considered historical materialism, even in the sense of "economic determinism," as a path-breaking step in social theory. But he considered Marx's weakest point to be his own self-understanding. According to Weber, while historical materialism is a powerful system of ideal-types, based on the primacy of the economic factor, Marx mistakenly saw it as the discovery of the real (ultimately economic) tendencies and motive forces of history.[113] Furthermore, Marxism, Weber argued, refused to recognize and distance itself from its own values (ideals), and it violated the criterion of scientific value-freedom by not understanding the limits of a constructed scientific objectivity, by having too much faith in science.[114] On the other hand, Weber took very seriously Marx's theory of capitalist development (or his own understanding thereof), and he thought of his own work (especially in the area of the sociology of religion) not as a refutation of Marx, not as an attempt to work out a reverse kind of determinism, but as an attempt to work out a system of ideal types, emphasizing the "ideological" side, complementing the work of Marx, and leading to a more adequate reconstruction of the historical causes of the present. But Weber, especially because of his own pessimistic understanding of the social world of his time, was also forced to confront a different Marx; the revolutionary

111. Max Weber, "Science as Vocation," in *From Max Weber,* ed. and trans. H. Gerth and C.W. Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 147-148.

112. Löwith, "Max Weber und Karl Marx," *op.cit.* In spite of some problems, this famous study remains by far the best treatment of the Weber-Marx problem.

113. Weber, *Methodology, op.cit.,* p. 103.

114. Löwith, "Max Weber und Karl Marx," *op.cit.,* pp. 66-67.

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theorist of the transformation of this world. In this context, he came to accuse Marxism of ethical utopianism and of promoting an irrational ethic of ultimate ends. Weber himself opted for an ethic of responsibility, based on the *rational*, scientific calculation of possible consequences, and necessary means of an action.[115] But, given his presupposition of an individualist ontology from which he never "distanced" himself, Weber had to opt for this ethic of responsibility, representing only the most rational adaptation to the unfolding of the various forms of Western Rationality.[116] Furthermore, given his increasingly all-encompassing understanding of the concept of Western Rationality, Weber sincerely disbelieved that any practice based on the revolutionary socialist ethic of ultimate ends could result in human liberation. He argued that the victory of socialist revolution, in the context of the need to maintain or to create a modern industrial civilization, will have the unintended consequence of re-establishing most of the forms of the old regime.[117] Whatever the merits of this argument (and serious theoretical objections should not blind us to his foresight), Weber's own solution based on an ethics of responsibility was extremely problematic. As we have already implied, the "ethics of responsibility"—although defined in terms of a goal oriented rationality—was primarily concerned with the possible rational means toward the goal. Yet, in a fully rationalized world, the secularization of "ultimate end" into "goal" could only be a half-way step toward total "disenchantment," Weber constantly refers to the tendency of mere means to become goals (e.g., money making for the Puritan, money making for the modern capitalist) and honestly calls this "irrational." Thus, rationalization (and along with it the "ethic of responsibility") turns out to be "rationalization toward the irrational" which, as Löwith shows so powerfully, is ultimately the movement from action based on human needs, to action (or rather a process independent of human interference) that totally disregards human needs.[118]

115. Max Weber, "Politics as Vocation," in *From Max Weber, op.cit.*, pp. 120-122. We will not explore this problematic in detail just yet, because Weber was engaged in a dialogue with Lukács on precisely the question of ethics. Cf. Marianne Weber, *Max Weber, Ein Lebensbild* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1926), p. 474; Arthur Mitzman, *The Iron Cage* (New York: Grosset's, 1969), chapter 9.

116. Löwith, "Max Weber und Karl Marx," *op.cit.*, pp. 84-85.

117. Weber, "Politics as Vocation," *op.cit.*, p. 100 and p. 121. Weber's theory of bureaucracy in *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* allowed him to make the same argument in a particularly powerful way. He argued both that bureaucracy can be destroyed only by a revolutionary rival possessing an equally powerful bureaucratic organization, and that socialism (to achieve its material purposes) would require a higher degree of formal bureaucratization than capitalism. As he increasingly identified Western rationality with the bureaucratization of all forms of life, it became more and more difficult for Weber to imagine any other form of development, given the "decision" to industrialize. Cf. Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, ed. G. Roth and C. Wittich (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968), I, pp. 224-225. Weber interpreted not only socialism as leading to a more complete rationalization, but also "romantic irrationalism." Cf. "Science as a Vocation," *op.cit.*, p. 143.

118. Löwith, "Max Weber und Karl Marx," *op.cit.*, pp. 85-87. This conflict between "formal rationality" and "substantive (material) rationality" was the source of all implicitly

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This context represents the third area of confrontation between Weber and Marx. The first two areas are more properly described as Weber's critique of two poles of the antinomies of vulgar Marxism, economic determinism and ethical utopianism. In the third area, however, the confrontation was only implicit; Weber never recognized Marx as the dialectical theorist of total society. Furthermore, Weber considered himself only a specialist. Karl Löwith argues that Weber's misunderstanding of Marx and his parallel self-misunderstanding hide the truth that both had *the same object* of investigation: the totality of the tendencies of the development of the modern world.[119] Löwith ultimately distinguishes between Marx and Weber only in terms of their contrary (individualist vs. social) definitions of freedom and human subjectivity. But here we must disagree with Löwith. A different conception of the subject means also a different conception of the object. Or rather, even if Marx's and Weber's description of the immediacy (the level of appearance) of the world of capitalism were identical, the dynamic of this object was understood quite differently by them, ultimately *because* of their opposing concepts of subjectivity. Marx tried to integrate *his* notion of human *praxis* into the fabric of the object, and he sought the dialectic of this object, in part in the conscious activity of the subject. He always retained the Hegelian concept of Objective Spirit or objectification implying a subject-object dialectic. According to Weber, on the other hand, a creative subjectivity existed once, but it no longer exists. Thus, he collapsed the level of appearance and the level of essence—he tended to make rationalization its own immanent developmental tendency. While unfolding the implications of capitalist rationalization, through a wealth of phenomena that far surpassed the scope of Marx's analysis, Weber tended to eternalize the appearances (or their empirical tendency) he described. His self-misunderstanding as a mere specialist ultimately rested on his individualist resignation in face of "the fate of Western man."

Scientific specialization, for Weber, was the result of the de-magicization of the Protestant concept of "calling" or "profession" [*Beruf*]. Weber characterized himself as a strict specialist, but he tried to conceptualize specialization in terms that easily permitted later existentialist interpretations of his work (e.g., Jaspers, Löwith, Merleau-Ponty). He argued for the necessity to incorporate the passionate devotion of the whole personality in even the most specialized sciences.[120] In 1904-1905 he could conceive of two possibilities for the future of specialization: he spoke of a possible world of "mechanical petrification," characterized by "specialists without

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dynamic elements (and there are many) in Weber's formal sociology in *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*. Cf. *Economy and Society* I, *op.cit.*, pp. 85-86; p. 225; III, *op.cit.*, p. 985; p. 991.

119. Löwith, "Max Weber und Karl Marx," *op.cit.*, p. 214.

120. Weber, "Science as a Vocation," *op.cit.*, pp. 134-135. The argument applied to all other areas of human activity—politics or mysticism.

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spirit,"[121] but he also spoke of a possible cultural reversal characterized by science viewing "the stream of events from the heights of thought."[122] By 1918, Weber could only try to combine these two notions in his concept of the self-reflective specialist *with* spirit. "Science today is a 'vocation' organized in special disciplines in the service of self-clarification and knowledge of interrelated facts."[123] He interpreted this 'vocation' as the result of a courageous choice that could not be culturally and historically justified in a world characterized by the struggle of the gods. Weber interpreted the choice as especially courageous, because of his hatred for the world of rationalization and for narrow unreflective rationalism ("intellectualism").[124] There is no reason to contest his personal courage. But his own theory of disenchantment implies the strong likelihood (even the necessity) of the secularization of this last trace of spirit and commitment justifying the specialized sciences. As most of the Baden neo-Kantians, in the end Weber justified the unreflective positivism that he hated.[125]

V

In the period before the first World War only Dilthey and Simmel understood some of the crucial weaknesses of the neo-Kantian ground in the cultural battle against positivism. Yet, paradoxically, their early stress on psychology, and even their eventual turn toward *Lebensphilosophie* represented even greater concessions to the fragmented world of positivism than the rigid dualism of the neo-Kantians. However, we are primarily interested in a stage in their thought between psychologism and *Lebensphilosophie*—a stage dominated by the Hegelian concept of *objektiver Geist*—and only secondarily in their movement from "psyche" to "Geist" to "life." Or rather, we will seek to locate this movement in the problems of their differing concepts of objective spirit.

We have argued that Dilthey's discussions of hermeneutics already foreshadowed a position that could have implied the abandonment of his attempt to base the possibility of the historical sciences on any psychology. The decisive shift came around 1905: his work on the young Hegel and perhaps Husserl's critique of psychologism may have pushed Dilthey in a direction that was in any case anticipated in his earlier work. It is somewhat

121. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic*, *op.cit.*, p. 152.
122. Weber, *Methodology*, *op.cit.*, p. 112.
123. Weber, "Science as a Vocation," *op.cit.*, p. 152.
124. Cf. Weber's juxtaposition of the cultivated man (whom he tends to prefer) to the expert, the specialist in *Economy and Society* III, *op.cit.* Also, see "Science as a Vocation," *op.cit.*, p. 152, where he characterizes "intellectualism" as "the worst devil."
125. We don't mean the law constituting, naturalistic positivism of the nineteenth century, but the unreflective, anti-theoretical positivism of the special sciences, many of whom came to use Weber's "constructionist" or "fictionalist" understanding of concepts (cf. "models") but all of whom disregarded Weber's confrontation with the whole of his social world.

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more difficult to locate equally sharp stages in Simmel's intellectual development.[126] Nevertheless, if we keep Dilthey in mind, important similarities emerge in the development of Simmel's theoretical approach to history and historiography. For example, the first edition (1892) of *Die Probleme der Geschichtsphilosophie* contained an attack on the neo-Kantian division of the sciences, on the basis of the psychological premisses of historical study.[127] Even the second edition (1905) insisted on a delimitation of historical facts to psychical facts, and argued that history *appears* to be an applied psychology in the sense that if a "Psychologie als Gesetzeswissenschaft" existed, history would relate to it as astronomy relates to mathematics.[128] Many of Dilthey's early formulations immediately come to mind. But we should take the word "appear" seriously. In the second edition of the *Geschichtsphilosophie*, Simmel explicitly rejects psychological reductionism even as he maintains that the object of history is composed of psychic facts and events. Psychology seeks the repeatable, the general, the lawlike dimension of psychic facts. History seeks their meaningful, individual and unique dimension.[129] This was a concession to Rickert's version of neo-Kantian theory. It is worth stressing that, unlike Dilthey, Simmel was always somehow within the overall perspective of neo-Kantianism. He initially accepted the two-worlds theory of the realm of facts and the realm of values.[130] And even when he abandoned the two-worlds theory for a many-worlds theory, he partially retained the viewpoint of transcendental constitution (the principle of constitution being "form," not value). Nevertheless, the "transcendental-empirical ambiguity" that the transcendental constitution of the historical realm tends to imply worked out differently in Simmel than in orthodox Baden neo-Kantianism. The *Geschichtsphilosophie* which was an explicitly Kantian undertaking,[131] already implied

126. Indeed it is often argued that Simmel was a dilletante whose thought was characterized only by a constant shift of perspectives and points of view. On the other hand, Weingartner recently argued that Simmel's thought was *always* unified around the perspective of *Lebensphilosophie*. Cf. R.H. Weingartner, *Experience and Culture. The Philosophy of Georg Simmel* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1960), p. ix.

127. Heinz Maus, "Simmel in German Sociology," in *Georg Simmel, 1858-1918*, ed. Kurt H. Wolff (Ohio State University Press, 1959), p. 192.

128. Georg Simmel, *Die Probleme der Geschichtsphilosophie* (5th unchanged ed., Munich and Leipzig: Duncker und Humblat, 1923), pp. 1-2.

129. Maus, "Simmel in German Sociology," *op.cit.*, pp. 192-193.

130. Georg Simmel, *Die Philosophie des Geldes* (6th ed. [same as 1907 2nd ed.], Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1958), pp. 3ff. But this adherence to orthodox neo-Kantianism was only partial. Simmel tended to disregard the Baden conception of the primacy of the practical. For him, "value" and "reality" were two "forms," two systems of language that structure the "contents" of the world. Thus, the theoretical concept "form" is Simmel's transcendental point of departure. Furthermore, Simmel always postulated the possibility of a metaphysics reuniting value and fact. Cf. *Philosophie des Geldes, op.cit.*, p. 7.

131. Cf. the preface to the third [1907] edition to the *Geschichtsphilosophie* that explicitly argued that the theoretical task is to show the possibility of the transcendental constitution of history in the same sense that Kant uncovered the transcendental condition of the possibility of the constitution of nature. Simmel, *Geschichtsphilosophie, op.cit.*, pp. 5-6.

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the Hegelian element that we must focus on: the notion of objectification. This was already a moment of the distinction between history and psychology. According to Simmel, both are interested in psychic facts. But while psychology is interested in the psychic *process*, history is more interested in the *contents* of psychic life. Or, rather, history is interested in the interrelationship of psychic process with the content of psychic processes: it involves a subject-object interrelationship while psychology is interested only in the structure of the subject.[132] This stress on a subject-object relationship (in spite of an excessively psychological formulation) immediately differentiates Simmel from most neo-Kantians. Human psyche are both the subjects and objects of history; how is this peculiarity to be explained? The explanation moves us into Simmel's philosophy of culture, which will yield us Simmel's common ground with Dilthey.[133]

Simmel does not start out with a metaphysical dualism of subject and object: he presupposes a primordial (and non-intelligible) subject-object unity at the beginning of human psychical development. As in Freud, ego formation and the formation of the external world (which is also the content of the ego), that is the beginning of subject and object separation, occur as the primordial subject-object unit (or rather raw *desire*) encounters resistance. Furthermore, Simmel postulates that a subject-object unity underlies all experience.[134] He uses Dilthey's concept of *Erleben* or *Erlebnis* often in the sense of a basic psychic subject-object unit.[135] These units make up the underlying *contents* of our over-all experience, but their non-intelligible unity can only be intuited. Self-reflection, indeed all action, already represents the dissolution of a "primitive" life based on subject-object unity—and the recovery of this unity can be attempted only at a higher stage of our cultural activity. The formation of the ego (and Simmel always interprets *subject* in the individual sense) and of the external world, or rather their separation, is the beginning point of the formation of culture. Simmel's philosophy of culture *is not* neo-Kantian, although it does begin

132. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

133. It is almost impossible to argue that Simmel had a psychologistic period as sharply defined as that of Dilthey. On the one hand, he relied on psychological investigation far less than Dilthey, yet his notion of subectivity was far more consistently individualistic and atomistic. In any case (contrary to Weingartner's interpretation), Simmel's philosophy of culture and the transformation of this into a philosophy of life do represent rather distinct stages of his development.

134. Simmel, *Die Philosophie des Geldes, op.cit.*, pp. 9ff; 11ff. The first edition of *Die Philosophie des Geldes* had a different position in this context. Here, Simmel considered the division of the human personality into subject and object a basic fact of the intellect that could not be derived from anything more primordial. Cf. *Die Philosophie des Geldes* (1st ed., Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot, 1900), p. 14 [we generally refer to the 6th ed.]. The difference between the two editions is the difference between an epistemological premiss (dualistic) of neo-Kantianism and one (monistic, intuitionist) of *Lebensphilosophie*. This difference had no effect on Simmel's philosophy of culture which is the same in all editions of the *Philosophy of Money*, demonstrating the argument that the philosophy of culture is indeed not deduced from (or is necessarily connected to) the concept of life.

135. Cf. Weingartner, *Experience and Culture, op.cit.*, pp. 41-42.

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with the neo-Kantian problem of nature vs. culture, and it does retain some neo-Kantian elements. With Rickert, Simmel believed that "nature" and "culture" *are* two different ways of constituting the same phenomena (or phenomenal contents) of human life.[136] But for Simmel the concept of nature had two meanings. The first was indeed Kantian: "the all inclusive complex of phenomena connected in causal chains." The second meaning of nature, however, was anthropological and dialectical: "a particular phase in the development of the subject—namely, the phase in which it unfolds its own potential, and which ends as soon as a more intelligent and purposive will takes over these forces..."[137] As soon as Simmel begins to work with this second notion of nature, the notion of transcendental constitution is bypassed. Nature and culture represent the continuum of human development, from a potential, a "dynamics" that is natural, to the cultivation of this "dynamics" that is teleological and purposive. "Cultivation"[138] ultimately refers to our self-cultivation: "man alone is the proper object for culture; for he is the only being known to us in which the challenge of perfectibility exists from the outset."[139] However cultivation in this sense is intrinsically problematic because of the subject-object duality that characterizes our *conscious* existence (given ego-formation and separaton) "self-cultivation" can only be indirect. "Culture exists only if man draws into his development *something that is external to him.*"[140] Our "nature" implies the *potential* of cultural development, but we can realize this potential only through "cultivating" things.[141] However, not all transformation of the external world involves self-cultivation. Highly specialized and merely technical action toward external objects does involve the emergence of subjective skills and capabilities. But these skills and capabilities are sharply one-sided. For Simmel, culture refers to the cultivation of the whole personality,[142] to the enrichment of the subject as totality through the creative transformation of the object. Thus, culture seeks to resolve the

136. However, their principles of constitution were slightly different. For Rickert phenomena can be structured according to the absence of value (i.e., nature) or the presence of value (i.e., culture). For Simmel the basic distinction was causal (nature) vs. teleological (culture) analysis. The most significant divergence here was that while Rickert identified the valuable with the unique and the individual, Simmel did not do this for the purposive. Cf. Georg Simmel, "Subjective Culture" [translation of "Von Wesen der Kultur," 1908] in *Georg Simmel. On Individuality and Social Forms*, ed. D. Levine (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), pp. 227-228.

137. Simmel, "Subjective Culture," *op.cit.*, p. 228.

138. Simmel constantly refers back to the everyday meaning of the term: we "cultivate" fruits, plants but not tables and chairs—i.e., (because) trees have the dynamic *telos* to bear fruit, but not to become furniture.

139. Simmel, "Subjective Culture," *op.cit.*, p. 119; also Simmel, "On the Concept and Tragedy of Culture," in *The Conflict of Modern Culture and other Essays*, trans. and ed. P. Etzkorn (New York: Teachers College Press, 1968), p. 29.

140. Simmel, "Subjective Culture," *op.cit.*, p. 230; "On the Concept and Tragedy of Culture," *op.cit.*, p. 30.

141. Simmel, *Philosophie des Geldes, op.cit.*, p. 503.

142. Simmel, "Subjective Culture," *op.cit.*, p. 232.

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subject-object dualism through creation that is also self-creation.[143] But this resolution is the task of a historical process, and it cannot be achieved immediately. Simmel is therefore forced to create a higher level subject-object dualism, i.e., subjective culture or spirit (*subjektiver Kultur: Geist*) which are two necessary dimensions of culture and are not identical. Subjective culture represents the level of self-cultivation of individuals: it is the *goal* of all cultural process. Objective culture represents the external (in the sense of intersubjective, and *not necessarily* in the spatial, material sense) realm of "cultivated" "things"—the necessary *means* toward self-cultivation. For Simmel, the dialectic of subjective and objective culture yields the central category of all historicity, i.e., objectification [*Vergegenständlichung*]. The power of this concept breaks through Simmel's individualistic prejudice.[144] He argues that *objectification* implies the cultural work [*Geistesarbeit*] of countless generations, indeed of the human species, in the areas of language and morals, politics and religion, literature and technology, etc. It is actually the only source for the potential enrichment of individuals. The objectification of the spirit is the form that guarantees what would be impossible on the biological level: the "inheritance of what is acquired" [*die Vererbung des Erworbenen*].[145] But *spirit* never takes the form of the absolute in Simmel. The meaning of the objectification of the spirit can lie only in the development of subjective spirit: in the development of "total" individuals. It is in this context that the cultural project *does not* and *cannot attain* its goal. The contrast with Hegel's far more optimistic philosophy of spirit is striking. Well into the positivist era, Simmel no longer even considers the possibility of transcending objective spirit in the direction of an increasingly rational self-reflection of the spirit: *Absoluter Geist*, i.e., art, religion and philosophy. In Dilthey's theory of objective spirit this problem *was* consciously posed, and Dilthey made an explicit decision to collapse the notions of objective and absolute spirit.

For Dilthey the subject-object relationship was the touchstone for his understanding of history, even before he developed a theory of objective spirit. He first interpreted the concept of *Erleben* or *Erlebnis* as referring to primordial (and psychic) subject-object units from which the historical world could be constructed, or, rather, reconstructed and re-experienced. Within this framework, the concept of *Verstehen* meant the empathetic reconstruction of internal, psychic states. Even after Dilthey's (never complete) rejection of psychologism, the subject-object relationship remained the basis of the distinction between history and nature. But now

143. Simmel, "On the Concept and Tragedy of Culture," *op.cit.*, pp. 29ff; pp. 35ff. Here Simmel argues that the cultural project represents an attempted synthesis between subject and external world.

144. His individualism returns (but with a "historical" justification) in the context of the tragedy of culture that atomizes men.

145. Simmel, *Philosophie des Geldes, op.cit.*, p. 502; pp. 510-511.

146. Dilthey, *Ges. Schr.* VII, *op.cit.*, p. 90.

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the subject-object problem was drastically reinterpreted. Nature, Dilthey still argued, knows no subject, but, at best, only a merely external subject-remnant that constructs hypothetical concepts for the sake of instrumental control.[146] History, however, is the realm of a full subject-object dialectic: in history subjectivity is unlimited. History is the deed of men. Dilthey consciously revived Vico's argument that we known history because we make history: because the historian is also a historical actor. "*Nur was der Geist geschaffen hat, versteht er.*" In this context, we have a radical transformation of the meaning and scope of the concept of *Verstehen*: it has its unified object in the objectification of life.[147] *Verstehen* refers not to the re-experiencing of internal states, but to the re-construction of the generation of cultural products.[148] Thus, the power of the concept of "objectification" finally allowed Dilthey to explicitly reject a psychological interpretation of historical understanding.[149] And yet aspects of his earlier psychological and empathetic concept of *Verstehen* continued to reappear in his work. To understand this paradox, we must examine the structure and tensions of Dilthey's concept of objectification (or objective spirit) more closely.

The concept of objectification is for the late Dilthey (as for Simmel) the basic category of historicity. Let us begin with what objectification creates, i.e., objective spirit. The world we live, act, perceive and think in is a man-created world. We are constantly surrounded by historical products; no part of *our* world is *immediately* natural. For Dilthey the emergence of an estranged "second nature" (Marx's "alienation," Simmel's "tragedy of culture," Weber's "rationalization," and Lukács' "reification") is hardly a problem. "We are at home everywhere in this historical and understood 'world'."[150] He defines objective spirit as the outer realm of the spirit. According to Dilthey, the individual, the community and the work are the three forms of this "outer" realm. It is quite important that he defines the individual not as an introspective atom, but as a social-historical product. Yet, he does not mean to merely read off the meaning of a spatially given objective spirit. Such procedure could never yield time and historicity. The objective spirit (for theory at least) is not simply given: it is created. Historical analysis must reconstruct this creation, and it can do so because the historian (himself an individual) is part of the fabric of objective spirit. Thus, when Dilthey associates *Erleben* and *Verstehen* in the analysis of objective spirit, he is no longer speaking of psychological reliving, but of interpretive reconstruction of the genesis of cultural products in terms of

147. *Ibid.*, p. 148. The range of the *Geisteswissenschaften* is identical to the newly defined range of *Verstehen*.

148. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Intersts, op.cit.*, pp. 146f.

149. Cf. Dilthey, *Ges. Schr.* VII, *op.cit.*, pp. 84-85, where he explicitly criticizes psychologism.

150. *Ibid.*, pp. 147-148. Methodologically, this meant to Dilthey that we must "abstract" everything rigid and foreign from our historical concepts. Thus, he closed his method to an understanding of alienated forms in our social world. But these forms do not disappear just because theory disregards them.

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intersubjective *symbols* that are first given in external experience.[151] The theory of hermeneutics already contained this stress on *symbol*, but only a new emphasis on the intersubjective realm of objective mind could make this stress really fruitful.

Dilthey was far more insistent than Simmel on making objective spirit an intersubjective realm, on understanding objectification and its interpretation, i.e., *Verstehen*, as an intersubjective task: "in the realm of objective spirit every *single externalization of life* [*Lebenäusserung*] *represents* something *common*. Every word, every sentence, every gesture, every rule of etiquette, every work of art and every historical action is understandable only because the people who express themselves through it and those who understand it have something in common: the individual always experiences, thinks and acts in a sphere of commonness, and only there does he understand."[152] Elsewhere, he says: "fundamental experience of community permeates the entire way of apprehending the world of the spirit...the experience of community is the presupposition of the understanding."[153] Dilthey conceptualizes the dynamic of the intersubjective realm of objective spirit, the dynamic of community and communication, in terms of three concepts: experience [*Erleben*], expression [*Ausdruck*], and understanding [*Verstehen*]. To the extent that the expressions, the externalizations of experiences (words, gestures, creations) are experienced, understood, and perhaps re-expressed in terms of intersubjectively valid symbols, we can (according to Dilthey) speak of the interpretation of objective mind.[154] This, however, does not apply only to a merely contemplative interpretation. *Verstehen* first arises from the interests of practical life.[155] In everyday life, men must constantly interpret the meanings of each other's gestures, sentences and actions. They can do so because of a wealth of shared meanings and symbols, and because they are part of a community. Individual ego development consists party of the appropriation of the world of objective spirit, and this is the precondition for an individual being a functioning member of a community. The "vertical moment" of intersubjectivity is the development of the individual (in time) in terms of previously created objects or symbols. But this vertical moment is intrinsically related to a horizontal moment (in space) of a functioning community without which no symbolic learning or communication is possible. Community is thus equal to the possibility of a whole range of "elementary forms" of *Verstehen*. Dilthey defines elementary forms of *Verstehen* as involving only the *experience* of simple, everyday *expressions* which

151. Cf. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests, op.cit.*, pp. 146-147.
152. Dilthey, *Ges. Schr.* VII, *op.cit.*, pp. 146-147.
153. *Ibid.*, p. 141.
154. *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87. This applies also to our self-reflection. For the late Dilthey, even self-knowledge takes the "circuitous road of the understanding," and self-knowledge through introspection is severely limited.
155. *Ibid.*, p. 207.

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presuppose an established system of objectively valid structures and symbols. Higher forms of *Verstehen*, on the other hand, tend to respond to (and reconstruct) aspects of the process of the creation of objective spirit. Nevertheless, both forms have a historical dimension because in the objective spirit "the past is a permanently enduring present for us." Furthermore, both forms of *Verstehen* seem to have the same structure presupposing a unity of experience, expression and *Verstehen*. Thus, they are both contemplative and practical. The distinction between historian and historical actor is, to this extent, implicitly but not altogether discarded by Dilthey. Objective spirit is a highly articulated order which elementary forms of *Verstehen* adapt to, but cannot really "understand," or transform. For Dilthey, this understanding presupposes the reconstruction of historical totalities within the overall structure of objective spirit.[156]

Dilthey developed his concept of totality as an answer to the question "how is the science of history possible." He was forced to pose this question because he refused to place the Hegelian concept of objective spirit into an overall Hegelian framework that traces out the movement of spirit from nature (the alienation of the spirit) to absolute spirit (the self-reflection of the spirit in art, religion and philosophy). Dilthey objected to Hegel's procedure on several grounds. From an anti-metaphysical, positivist ground, he criticized Hegel's speculative system-building. From an historicist ground, he criticized the special distinction that art, philosophy and religion received in the Hegelian system. For Dilthey, these too had to be brought under the heading of objective spirit, the more so, since he refused to recognize the claims of an all inclusive rationality; from a ground that tied him to Nietzsche (and Freud) he asserted the existence of dark, irrational drives, and the fragility of all that is human.[157] His critiques of Hegel forced Dilthey to attempt to give a new foundation to the possibility of comprehending objective spirit as a structural, unified, dynamic whole (or wholes). Since he collapsed absolute spirit into objective spirit, he lost the external, regulative principle that in Hegel unified objective spirit itself. This unity was always threatened by the fragmentation implied by the concept of alienation. Hegel discovered alienation *and* the *telos* of its overcoming from the vantage point of a comprehensive subject-object dialectic.[158] Of course,

156. *Ibid.*, pp. 211-212.

157. *Ibid.*, p. 151.

158. Herbert Marcuse's reconstruction of Hegel's early system in *Reason and Revolution* demonstrates how, after conceiving the absolute as pure negativity (p. 47), Hegel discovered the world of intersubjectivity (language and labor) turning into the world of alienation (pp. 75ff; pp. 78ff). Given alienation, Hegel sought reconciliation alternatively in the state and in a new (and more immanent) notion of the Absolute Spirit—art, religion and philosophy.

Even the new conception of the absolute retained its moment of negativity and transcendence *vis-à-vis* the fragmented subject in the fragmented world; "For the monad [i.e., the isolated, atomized individual] essential being exists as something external, as absolute transcendence. But in fact, for us [for philosophy] this transcendence is the immanence of the monad." G.W.F. Hegel, *Jenenser Logik, Metaphysik und Naturphilosophie*, ed. G. Lasson (East Berlin:

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Marx already criticized Hegel for positing an ultimately false overcoming in terms of an absolute subject that left everything (in the world) as it was. He called this Hegel's bad *positivism*, and conceptually tied Hegel's final formulation of a mythical Absolute Subject to his inability to distinguish between alienation and objectification.[159] Nevertheless, Marx's own notion of the self-constituting praxis of the human species is only a dialectical extension of Hegel's *Absolute*—indeed, philosophy is an essential moment of this praxis. On the other hand, classical *positivism* (Comte) eliminated *both* the dimension of speculative self-reflection and the dimension of economic analysis (i.e., the analysis of the alienated forms of human existence) from social theory.[160] By the late nineteenth century, the various phenomena of the world of alienation (and of positivism) received a vast amount of critical attention in German academic circles. Dilthey himself was no exception in this context. Yet, the concept of alienation (or any of its pseudonyms) is absent from his late theory of objective spirit.[161] As with classical positivism, in Dilthey the absence of the category of alienation is merely the other side of the absence of the category of the Absolute Spirit (or the category of *praxis*). Without positing a transcendental foundation of critique, the dialectic of essence (objectification) and appearance (alienation) could not be elaborated. The appearances of alienation, after all, do appear to be eternal. We can't find their dynamic if we don't look for it. Furthermore, the line between history and nature would have become difficult to maintain if Dilthey used the concept of alienation. To avoid this danger, Dilthey consciously banished the category from his theory.[162] He could do this because he eliminated the vantage point of Absolute self-reflection that would constantly have pointed to the rupture between the potential of objectification and its alienated actuality. But this procedure (as Dilthey recognized) also threatened a unified conception of the sphere of objective spirit. As a result, Dilthey had to face the danger of historical relativism and skepticism. Under the circumstances, he had two alternatives: he could seek a unifying principle within objective spirit itself, or seek a new (and less explosive, less critical) principle of unity.

Akademie Verlag, 1968), p. 177. What Hegel is saying is that while philosophy can synthesize the self-reflection of the species [*Gattung*], in a torn world of monadic subjects this synthesis will appear as pure negativity, as transcendence. Cf. also Jean Hyppolite, *Studies on Marx and Hegel*, tr. John O'Neill (New York, 1969), p. 7 and pp. 12ff.

159. Karl Marx, *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, trans. M. Milligan (New York: International Publishers, 1964), pp. 175-176; pp. 188ff. Marx's critique can be reinterpreted as saying that Hegel confused the transcendental vantage point of self-reflection, involving a subject-object identity (and the *telos* of the activity of the species) with the empirical overcoming of the subject-object duality in the world. Philosophy can point to a *telos*, but only praxis can realize it.

160. Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution, op.cit.*, pp. 340f.

161. Furthermore, he never attempted to incorporate the "sociology" of Marx, Tönnies, Simmel and Weber in his theory of history, though he did distinguish between Simmel's sociology and positivist sociology. Cf. *Ges. Schr.* I, *op.cit.*, pp. 420-421.

162. Dilthey, *Ges. Schr.* VII, *op.cit.*, p. 148.

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Dilthey never clearly distinguished between the two alternatives. He argued that in his theory of objective mind "life in its totality, i.e., experience, understanding, the historical context of life and the power of the irrational in this context" replaces Hegel's concept of an absolutely general reason.[163] On the other hand, he says that whereas Hegel constructed metaphysically, he analyzes the given. The totality of life, however, is not given. What is given is historical experience: the world of the objective spirit. Nevertheless, even this given *seems to* yield some unifying principles to an analysis that implicitly searches for coherence. Dilthey characterizes the objective spirit as a system (or systems) of interactions. In this context, he introduces another form of his basic distinction between nature and history: nature is a system unified by causal connections; history, i.e., the *geistige* world, is unified by its immanent teleological character, by the functional coherence of goals and purposes posited by groups and individuals. It is the very structure of the spirit, according to Dilthey, to create goods and values and to realize purposes.[164] He has no difficulty in locating the subject of historical creation. Historical analysis points to the individual, the community, and to larger integrations, all of which are conceived by Dilthey as structural wholes themselves. Ultimately, he argues, subjectivity resides in an intersubjectively conceived individual.[165] However, the fact that different individuals, communities, etc., posit, create and fight for different and even opposing and irreconcilable values and purposes does not escape Dilthey. Only on a very high level of abstraction can he represent *objective spirit* as a harmonious and unified realm. He knew history too well to be satisfied with this solution. He conceived of the individual, the community, the nation, etc., as totalities, but he implicitly understood (e.g., his constant return to the theory of empathy, the concept of the monadic individual) that under conditions of social fragmentation and atomization *all* of these totalities are threatened. As a result, he tried to import a unifying principle from "outside." To begin with, he tried the neo-Kantian notion of transcendental synthesis. The historian synthesizes the values, purposes and connections that are "carried" by individuals and communities. But Dilthey had no intention of retreating to orthodox neo-Kantianism. He tried to move from the (implicit) notion of transcendental synthesis to the (again only implicit) Hegelian notion of mediation: "science...gradualy replaces the *immediate* relations of life, its values and purposes, to the historical object by insight into the immanent relationships which exist in the system of interactions of the historical world..."[166] Thus, historical synthesis becomes the mediation of the immanent tendencies

163. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
164. *Ibid.*, p. 153.
165. *Ibid.*, p. 154.
166. *Ibid.*, p. 155. Cf. G.W.F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Meiner Verlag, 1952), p. 21.

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toward synthesis in the historical world itself. Quite dramatically, Dilthey makes this mediation the dynamic link between past, present and future. He even proposes an understanding of "absolute values" in terms of future-directed *praxis* that is based on the possibilities of the present.[167] This exploration of the foundations of a dialectics of praxis seems to have reconnected Dilthey to the tradition of dialectical theory. But his concretization of the historical dialectic in terms of the concept of life made this linkage illusory.

What is the immanent, historical basis of unifying, synthesizing historical wholes out of a heterogeneity of values, goods and purposes? This is Dilthey's question. He answers by locating the ground of unity in a historical similarity of ways of feeling, "inner life," and impulses that arise from inner life.[168] Furthermore, he defines history as life (i.e., the fullness, the variety, the interaction experienced by individuals) viewed in terms of continuity.[169] Life is the basis of all experience and interpretation since *Erleben, Nacherleben* are related to *Leben* as parts to a whole. He thus reinstates (implicitly and at times explicitly) his earlier empathetic concept of *Verstehen*. The ground of our ability to understand others in terms of our partial experiences lies in participation in the whole of life. This whole, however, is never immediately given. All historical experiences and creations are fragmentary and relative. The fragments open us to the fullness of life not through "conceptual cobwebs," but through direct experience (and re-experiencing).[170] *Thus,* Dilthey closes the unpublished plan toward the continuation of his *Aufbau*. He has come a full circle. In other writings of the same period he also reinstated the deduction of world views from absolute anthropological types.

The metaphysical concept of *Life,* and the complementary epistemological concept of *empathy* re-appear in Dilthey's work because of his inability to grasp and conceptualize the concrete dynamic of the objective spirit. The concept of Life in particular explains nothing. It is in itself irrational, and it can be conceptualized only in terms of the very phenomena it purports to explain.[171] Furthermore, the concept is strongly objectivistic, because the interpreter can only *survey* and *contemplate* a world whose *real dynamic* comes from "an omnipresent stream...which flows through all time."[172]

167. Dilthey, *Ges. Schr.* VII, *op.cit.*, p. 189.
168. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
169. *Ibid.*, p. 256.
170. *Ibid.*, p. 291.
171. Dilthey believed that the hermeneutic circle was not vicious. This is perhaps true when he uses the categories of *Erleben-Ausdruck-Verstehen* in limited contexts of objective spirit. But the claim is decidedly false when Dilthey relies on the (ontological) categories *Leben-Ausdruck-Verstehen*, because "life" (being a mythological totality) cannot have any referent outside of itself, cannot be enriched or developed in any way.
172. Cf. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests, op.cit.*, pp. 183f. Habermas convincingly demonstrates both the (objectivistic) contemplative notion of truth in *Lebensphilosophie* and its connection to naturalistic positivism.

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Both Dilthey's critique of positivism and his attempt to provide an independent foundation for the *Geisteswissenschaften* are undercut by this objectivism. Both the critique and the attempt rested on a new notion of historical subjectivity that *Lebensphilosophie* (at best a dogmatic philosophy of substance) denies. The philosophy of life represents a capitulation to positivism in the very context that involved the beginning of a powerful critique of positivism. The development of Simmel's philosophy from *Kulturkritik* to *Lebensphilosophie* demonstrates this even more dramatically.

We followed Simmel's definition of culture in terms of subjective culture and objective culture. Subjective culture, our self cultivation, is the end of the cultural activity; objective culture, the cultivation of things, is (supposed to be) the means to this end. But, according to Simmel, there is a general historical tendency toward the reversal of cultural ends and cultural means. Simmel points to a wide range of phenomena which show that while the "things" that surround us (technology, means of communication, science, language, etc.) are fantastically cultivated, the culture of individuals[173] lags far behind. Our life, external and internal, is full of a wealth of objects and symbols of which the individual can appropriate only a small fraction. Simmel is not speaking of a general decline of skills and knowledge, of course; he admits the vast increase of specialized knowledge. But specialized knowledge is not equal to the cultivation of whole personalities, to the development of subjective culture. Furthermore, Simmel does imply that the growth of a complex of specialized skills and products does have a subject correlate, i.e., the human species. However, since Simmel does not believe in any potential mediations between the species and the individual, he has no place for *Gattungs-Wesen* in his system. But the existence of contemporary phenomena that show the discrepancy between subjective and objective culture does not in itself validate a thesis of the "tragedy of culture." If objective culture is the deed of a cultural community, what is the basis of its "alienation" from that community and its members?

In his search for the basis of cultural tragedy, Simmel initially focused on the concept of the division of labor. The division of labor implies both the fantastic development of skills and capabilities that are suitable to one-sided activity, and the fragmentation (and undevelopment) of the total personality. Following Tönnies' analysis,[174] Simmel demonstrates that modern division of labor involves a fragmentation of the process and the object of

173. Simmel is explicit about his "aristocratic" prejudice here. He speaks only of the upper classes – the cultivation of the majority of men is hardly his concern, although he does not exclude them from his argument whenever appropriate. E.g., he speaks of the machine becoming more spiritual (*Geistvoller*) than the worker. Cf. *Philosophie des Geldes, op.cit.*, pp. 505f.

174. Ferdinand Tönnies, "Historicism, Rationalism, and the Industrial System" (1894), in *Ferdinand Tönnies: On Sociology: Pure, Applied and Empirical*, ed. and Trans. W.J. Cahnman and R. Heberle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), pp. 280ff.

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production into a set of partial operations and partial products. This involves a new level (with respect to traditional forms of the division of labor, e.g., guild labor, or with respect to artistic creation) of the fragmentation of the working subject because self-recognition in terms of a unified product becomes impossible. Tönnies even argued that whereas formerly the worker and his product were wholes confronting one another, now the worker is an atomized part of an ideal whole, a combined or collective worker (*Gesamtarbeiter*).[175] Simmel no longer uses this concept because for him the atomization of workers is final. He points to Marx's "fetishism of commodities" as a special case of a process where products, or rather cultural objects, become separated from their creators, and enter into relationships with one another disguising the social relationships of their producers.[176] For Simmel the fact of specialization in itself is responsible for fetishistic relationships: he believed that the relationship of the whole to its parts involves ever growing ruptures (also among the parts themselves) in all areas of life. We should point out that Simmel's relationship to Marx at this stage of his thought (we are speaking of the *Philosophie des Geldes*) was profoundly ambiguous. On the one hand, he stated his intention to build a psychological or even metaphysical framework as a new foundation underneath Historical Materialism: a framework that would make economic forms the results of "deeper valuations and streams."[177] He did not neglect this aim from the very beginning—hence his interpretation of commodity fetishism as the special case of something more general. But, on the other hand, in the *Philosophie des Geldes* at least, the power of the analysis lies precisely in the constant return of the argument to the process of industrial production. In this context, Simmel rediscovered major moments of Marx's theory of alienation that most interpreters (except Lukács in 1923) associated with Marx only after the discovery of the *1844 Paris Manuscripts*. The worker is separated (alienated) from other workers. He is separated from the instruments of production. He is even alienated from his own essential powers, his subjectivity, as "labor power becomes a commodity." Aspects of his personality are torn from him and become part of an objective impersonal order.[178] Lastly, the individual (worker, or anyone else for that matter) is alienated from the human species, from the created wealth (needs, capabilities, creations) of the species. Men become similar to one another, the differentiation of products leads to the standardization of men. This standardization is one of emptyness; it is attained through the increasing universality of work in terms of partial, repetitive, monotonous tasks.[179]

175. Tönnies, "Historicism, Rationalism and the Industrial System," *ibid.*, p. 281.
176. Simmel, *Philosophie des Geldes, op.cit.*, pp. 511-512; "On the Concept and Tragedy of Culture," *op.cit.*, p. 42.
177. *Ibid.*, p. viii.
178. *Ibid.*, pp. 514-515.
179. Cf. A. Arato, "Lukács' Path to Marxism," *Telos* 7 (Spring, 1971), p. 130.

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Simmel's description of the world of alienation never reflected a social-political stand against this world. The power of his early analysis, however, forced him to adopt rather sophistic (and cynical) positions, given the fact that he wanted to avoid taking such a stand. Of course, the atomization of men, which is a logical result of his analysis, seems to reduce the chances of the reversal of the process of alienation. But Simmel makes the development of alienation independent of social relations: the victims of alienation confront only an objective process but not human enemies. He argues that the process of production becomes totally independent of all human subjects, including the capitalist. All men are in the same position *vis-à-vis* the objective process and each other, they serve each other through partial operations and through the mediation of a totally impersonal order.[180] *Alienation destroys the existence of classes.* It is instructive to compare Simmel to Tönnies in this context. Tönnies also argued that modern (capitalist) industrialization ("rationalization") creates an objective, independent mechanism. He also believed that the result is the standardization of all men. But capitalist and workers are standardized at two different poles: "At one extreme we find the Capitalist being unspecified and alike, at the other extreme the workers."[181] Theoretically, this could mean the interchangeability of all functions, given the standardization and mechanization of most industrial tasks and given the fact that the owners of capital have now no industrial tasks as such. But while "the capitalistic establishments have become quite independent from their owners...they are being managed as if their objective were the enlargement of their owner's fortune and income..."[182] Thus, Tönnies shows how industrialization can both involve *general* alienation and the maintenance of capitalist social relations. He even assigns a human agent to the paradox. The managerial bureaucracy, to the extent that it incorporates mental work, represents the increasing homogenization and interchangeability of functions. But, to the extent that it maintains its hierarchical position *vis-à-vis* the workers, it rules the working class "in the interest of capital," i.e., the "lords of capital" who have no industrial function as such.[183] The way Tönnies poses the question (in terms of the unnecessary irrationality of capitalist rationality) already indicates the rough outlines of a possible solution. Posed in this way, the concept of alienation does not appear as the eternal fate of man. This was possible for Tönnies precisely because he did not dissolve the social relations of domination in a concept of alienation, and that he managed to build capitalist social relations into this concept. Simmel, who was indebted to Marx and Tönnies, chose a different path. But this meant a progressive de-emphasis of the criti-

180. Simmel, *Philosophie des Geldes, op.cit.*, p. 517.
181. Tönnies, "Historicism...," *op.cit.*, p. 282.
182. *Ibid.*, p. 284.
183. *Ibid.*, p. 283.

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cal dimensions of the concept of alienation: a progressive generalization of alienation into the tragic fate of all cultural existence implied by the metaphysical basis of this existence.

Most interpreters of Simmel regard his philosophy of culture as a whole. They can readily find roughly the same elements in a whole group of writings from 1900 to 1918. However, we must note an important shift in emphasis. After 1906, in no article on culture did Simmel regain the sociological concreteness of the *Philosophy of Money*, although all of his writings contained sociological elements. And conversely, although all of his writings used the concept of life, not until about 1918 was a philosophy of life presented as the comprehensive foundation for a philosophy of culture. The shift was gradual. Whereas the 1908 article "Vom Wesen der Kultur" spoke of the increased independence of objective culture "particularly in periods of social complexity and increasing division of labor,"[184] The 1911 article "Der Begriff und die Tragödie der Kultur" sought to locate the tragedy of culture primarily in the concept of culture itself. He defines a relationship as tragic "when the destructive forces directed against some being spring forth from the deepest levels of this very being.[185] The definition applies to culture because "even in its first moments of existence, culture carries something within itself which, as if by an intrinsic fate, is determined to block, burden, to obscure and divide its innermost purpose."[186] The argument is the following. The enrichment of the subject (subjective culture) can only take place through the mediation of the objective world. Thus, culture aims at a synthesis of subject and object, at the creative formation of the object world and the reappropriation of what is formed. Simmel locates the creative energies of this process in the subjective side, and calls it paradoxical that these energies reach fruition ("cultivation") only through forms which transcend the subject. He repeatedly calls these forms alien and attributes to them a tendency toward independence.[187] The synthetic aim of culture toward subject-object unity is inherently unstable: "the liaison dissolves because of the object's indigenous logic." Thus, for Simmel, all externalization [*Entäusserung*] or objectification [*Vergegenständlichung*] is equal to alienation [*Entfremdung*], but why?

In spite of his contrary claims, it is obvious that Simmel's concept of culture in itself does not mean that all objectification is alienation. If this were so, no subjective culture whatsoever could be possible. Thus, in the 1911 essay under discussion, Simmel is forced to make several references to the division of labor and specialization. But the implicit core of his explanation lies elsewhere. This core is hidden from Simmel because, in 1911, he no longer emphasized that the creation of objective culture is the inter-

184. Simmel, "Subjective Culture," *op.cit.*, p. 234.
185. Simmel, "On the Concept and the Tragedy of Culture," *op.cit.*, p. 43.
186. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
187. *Ibid.*, p. 30; p. 45.

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subjective task of the species or of the cultural community. Instead, he stresses the fact that the subjective reappropriation of the objectified forms is *individual* in a strict sense: "the contents with which the 'I' must organize itself into its own unified world do not belong to it alone. They are given to it from some spatially, temporarily idealized realm outside; they are simultaneously the contents of different social and metaphysical, conceptual and ethical worlds. In these they possess forms and relationships among one another that do not wish to dissolve into those of the 'I'."[188] And another quote states the matter even more precisely, although not deliberately: "Although *we* [my emphasis] generate them [the cultural forms], they must follow the guidelines of their own inner necessity, which is no more concerned with our individuality than are physical forces and their laws."[189] And, finally, in one place Simmel presents his presupposition of the atomized individual confronting alien forms most explicitly. "Everybody can contribute to the supply of objectified cultural contents without any consideration for other contributors." However, "the receptive capacity of the self is limited not only by the force and length of life, but also through a certain unity and relative compactness of its form... the infinitely growing supply of objectified spirit places demands before the subject, creates desires in him, hits him with feelings of individual inadequacy and helplessness..."[190] Let us grant that the isolated individual has never participated and will never participate in the whole wealth of cultural creations. In this context, even the modern division of labor could make only a little difference. But what about the increasing fragmentation and one-sidedness of individuals? After all, subjective culture was defined only by the development of the whole, cultivated, many sided (not "all-sided") personality. Once again, Simmel is forced to refer to overspecialization and the division or labor. In the context of the atomized subject, specialization can mean only rigid one-sidedness and never the conscious interdependence of cooperating individuals: of a collective subject. This last possibility is never considered by Simmel.[191] But without the well-worked out sociological framework of *Die Philosophie des Geldes* (relying on Marx and Tönnies, and

188. Simmel, "On the Concept and the Tragedy of Culture," *op.cit.*, p. 40. The epistemological basis of this passage is a theory of many worlds, i.e., the constitution of many worlds by different forms from a "Platonic realm" of contents. The "I" is one such form. But the transcendental point of view once again does not account for the empirical estrangement of the "I" in the context of the other forms.

189. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

190. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

191. One possible reason for this omission is a totally different evaluation of fragmentation in the realm of culture and in the social realm. For Simmel the fragmentation of social life was "liberating and gratifying." Cf. Donald Levine, "Introduction," in *Georg Simmel. On Individuality and Social Form*, pp. xlii-xliii. Simmel's double notion of "individual" establishes a link between bourgeois ideology and cultural disintegration. This link points to the "liberation" of a few in the midst of alienation. He draws this consequence explicitly, and argues that precisely the extension of *Verdinglichung* secures a few areas fundamentally free of *Verdinglichung*. Cf. *Philosophie des Geldes, op.cit.*, p. 532.

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stressing the alienation of labor that became only one special case of the overall process) his grounding of the "tragedy of culture," and of the ultimate atomization of individuals, seems rather thin. The concept of the tragedy of culture needed a more substantial foundation. Simmel hoped to locate this foundation in a metaphysics of life.

Simmel, unlike Dilthey, was never an enemy of metaphysical speculation.[192] Nevertheless, he first tended to consider "metaphysics" as merely one of many forms (or systems of forms) of the transcendental constitution of "reality." For example, in "Der Begriff und die Tragödie der Kultur" he distinguished between a metaphysical intention, seeking subject-object unity, and the necessity for the historical science of culture to uncover new levels of subject-object duality.[193] In a few years he came to understand the task of metaphysics (especially *vis-à-vis* culture) differently. A highly ambiguous interpretation of the concept of "form" was an early clue to the direction of this change. To begin with "form" was for Simmel the principle of the transcendental constitution of reality. In this sense, the forms are identical in function to Kant's a priori categories of the understanding.[194] Form represented not a mere summation of contents, but their unification and structuration,[195] and was identical to "the mind's ability to totalize."[196] The great forms are philosophy, art, science, and religion. But there are also lesser forms. Each forms the "world" into a structured totality—the result is the creation of many worlds. But Simmel, unlike Kant, interprets all forms as historical and, as a result, never completely realized in the world. Their historicity is a mark of finitude, but the scope of potential world contents is infinite.[197] As soon as this modification is introduced into the concept of form, the very notion of transcendental constitution is undermined. The forms remain the modes of mental activity, but the mental is assigned to an empirical and not a transcendental subject. This step marks a drastic departure from Kant, and clears the way to a metaphysical philosophy of life. And it makes little difference that in his *Soziologie* (1908) Simmel interpreted forms as the "autonomous play forms of sociality," as "aspects of individual experience and creativity."[198] Transcendental crea-

192. Already in the *Philosophie des Geldes, op.cit.* (p. viii—i.e., in 1900), he spoke about creating a metaphysical "Unterbau" for the truths of economic theory.

193. Simmel, "On the Concept and the Tragedy of Culture," *op.cit.*, p. 45.

194. Cf. Levine, "Introduction," *op.cit.*, p. xv.

195. Cf. Weingartner, *Experience and Culture, op.cit.*, pp. 32ff. Weingartner gives a good description of the concept of form, without, however, noticing its transcendental-empirical ambiguity.

196. Georg Simmel, "The Nature of Philosophy" (1910), tr. R. Weingartner in *Georg Simmel. 1858-1918, op.cit.* Simmel tried to interpret "history" as one special system of forms that uses documents, etc., as its content. His concept of *Verstehen* tended to be used (although preserving a psychological, intuitive *Nacherleben* as one of its moments) in the sense of the synthesis, unification of historical "contents." For the subtleties of Simmel's concept of *Verstehen*, cf. Weingartner, *Experience and Culture, op.cit.*, chapter II.

197. Simmel, "The Nature of Philosophy," *op.cit.*, pp. 290-291.

198. Levine, "Introduction," *op.cit.*, p. xlii.

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tivity and empirical creativity are not the same, and do not have the same consequences. Already in the *Soziologie*, Simmel began to speak of a "fundamental dualism" pervading the basic form of all sociation [*Vergesellschaftung*]. He saw this dualism in the fact that relations between individuals which are fluctuating, developing processes of life, must receive a stable external form: a form that changes and develops slower than its living basis. In this context, Simmel argues, forms *express* the "stream," the incessant process of our inner life but they also tend to *rigidify* and *limit* this life.[199] The concept of the tragedy of culture is easily discernible in this double function of empirical form. In other words, the formative activity of subjective culture is impossible without the objectification of forms, but the independent movement of the crystallized forms of objective culture becomes a limitation on the further activity and enrichment of individuals. But the re-statement of the tragedy of culture in terms of the conflict of "formation" with "form," of life with form, smoothly opens the way to a *Lebensphilosophie* where cultural alienation becomes a special instance of the conflict of life with life.

Many elements of Simmel's later philosophy of life appeared relatively early in his works. Nevertheless it is fair to say that (1) only in 1918 did he attempt to formulate a comprehensive metaphysics of life and that (2) his philosophy of culture maintained some of its critical edge until it was submerged in this metaphysics of life. Even the concept of life could be used in a critical way in the beginning, i.e., "life" representing human subjectivity; human creativity in the context of an alienated social world, a second nature. This meaning of the concept "life" represented resistance to the attempts of positivism (in the forms of naturalism, determinism and objectivism) to reduce subjectivity out of existence. However, Simmel's later *Lebensphilosophie*, paradoxically, also managed to destroy subjectivity by making the dualism of subject and object (subjective culture and objective culture) merely two modalities of the "unity" of life.

From the above viewpoint, Simmel's *Lebensanschauung: Vier Metaphysische Kapitel* (1918) begins harmlessly enough. Simmel starts his deduction of the concept of life with the human subject in the context of a vast and alien cosmos. The totality of this cosmos cannot be grasped by our cognitive, religious or aesthetic categories. Yet, we continually struggle to move beyond whatever we do grasp by these categories. This striving, this "self-transcendence" is life defined in terms of subjective experience. So far, so good. Subjectivity is certainly not destroyed by interpreting man "as a limited being that has no limit." However, subjective self-transcendence turns out to be only a special case of something quite different. A notion of time, that is not in itself inconsistent with the above notion of subjectivity, forms the departure for an intellectual reversal. With Bergson, Simmel

199. Georg Simmel, *Soziologie* (3rd ed., Munich and Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot, 1923) p. 442.

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unfolds from the structure of subjectivity a drastically non-mechanical, non-spatial notion of time involving the protrusion of the past into the present through pictures, concepts (objectifications) and memory, and the "preservation" of the future in the present in terms of goals.[200] Thus, when he says "life is truly past and future" the reader would not be unjust to conclude that Simmel interprets life as "human life," and more specifically as human life subjectively experienced in terms of a striving toward the future that incorporates the past. But Simmel, without announcing it, switches perspectives. As soon as he provisionally defines life as *durée*, he begins to treat the concept not merely as the category of internal experience, but as the fundamental category of existence (excluding only, unlike Bergson, the inorganic world).[201] He even manages to submerge human subjectivity itself in this new concept of life. "Life is a continuous stream proceeding through sequences of generations." And what are human individuals? They are the bearers of this process. Is life more than the *totality* of its bearers? Yes and No. Life flows "as these individuals." But individuals are not continuous. Simmel codifies the paradox into an antinomy of life. Life is continuous, yet it "dams up" in individuals, or more generally as individuated forms. All forms, social and cultural, represent the same sort of crystallization and even rigidification of life. The forms (including individuals) first appear as the "subjects" of life, but they turn out to be instruments that are themselves transcended by the flow of life.[202]

Simmel attempts to interpret this antinomy of continuity and form as the central dynamic of all historicity. The battle of life against "independent" rigidified forms is the ultimate basis of the history of culture. Old forms in all spheres of life are broken not by new forms but by life itself creating or strengthening new forms.[203] But this new notion of historicity is only

200. Georg Simmel, "The Transcendent Character of Life," *op.cit.*, pp. 360ff. Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will* [*Essai sur les données immediates de la conscience*, 1889], trans. F.L. Pogson (New York: Macmillen, 1960), pp. 153ff; pp. 211ff; and Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. A. Mitchell (New York: Henry Holt, 1911), pp. 44ff: "Duration is the continuous progress of the past that grows into the future."

201. Of course, the whole concept of life in Simmel could be (as Weingartner implies) an elaborate metaphor for human life in history. In this case, the past (objectification, memory) and future (goals) would be the part of an individual and collective present—the reason why this interpretation is not plausible for Simmel's late philosophy of life (it works better for the occasional appearance of the concept "life" in Simmel's earlier philosophy, but Weingartner insists on not distinguishing between the two) is that here the concept of life increasingly negates historicity in terms of spurious and mythological notions of subjectivity and objectivity (both defined as "life") that suppress the concrete social ground of the subject-object dialectic. For a different interpretation, cf. Weingartner, *Experience and Culture*, *op.cit.*, pp. 16-17; especially n. 6. Weingartner's effort to interpret Simmel's concept of life as human life cannot resolve (at the very least) the ambiguity that Simmel jumps from the transcendental constitution of the world from a subjective internal perspective, into an empirical, historical realm of intersubjectivity.

202. Cf. Simmel, "The Transcendent Character of Life," *op.cit.*, pp. 362-363; "The Conflict in Modern Culture," in *Georg Simmel*, ed. Levine, *op.cit.*, p. 375.

203. Simmel, "The Transcendent Character of Life," *op.cit.*, pp. 365-366; "The Conflict in Modern Culture," *op.cit.*, pp. 375-376.

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another perspective on the problem of the tragedy of culture. Life as spirit (as culture) can "sustain and elevate" itself only through its products, which unfortunately tend to become independent.[204] Or more "fundamentally," form freezes life and tends to break off from life, and yet life can enter reality "only in the form of form." But this time (and this is what his *Lebensphilosophie* is all about) Simmel thinks he can provide a resolution to the tragedy of culture.[205] The formula for the resolution of the "eternally felt conflicts of life" is that "transcendence is immanent in life."[206] This principle is the overcoming of dualism by unity or, rather, it is a "third principle, beyond dualism and unity."[207] The flow of life and the individuated form are both "life" from the viewpoint of an absolute concept of life that "unifies" them: life as self-transcendence.

When we examine the above unification closely, it becomes apparent that nothing is unified. Life is defined as both a continuous process, "more-life," and as individuated forms (products of the process), "more-than-life." The tragedy of culture can of course be reformulated in the new terminology: "Just as transcending its current limiting form within the plane of life itself constitutes more-life, which is nevertheless the immediate, inescapable essence of life itself, so do transcendences into the level of objective content of meaning that is logically autonomous and no longer vital, constitute the more-than-life, inseparable from life, and the very essence of mental life."[208] Thus, the tragedy of culture can be called the "self-alienation of life," the apparent contradiction of one dimension of Absolute Life with another dimension—an apparent contradiction that constitutes the essence of Life. We are not using the word "apparent" in vain, for Simmel is indeed telling us that the contradiction somehow does not exist. The very term "self-alienation" is spatial. If our language would have a purely temporal symbolism, we could "understand" that Absolute Life is continuous, and that only spatial symbolism introduces something "foreign" into life. Furthermore, the "intrinsically analytical character" of the intellect "prevents it from creating pure synthesis."[209] What appears as a contradiction in logical reflection (i.e., that life is at the same time itself and more than itself) can be "immediately experienced" as unity. If Simmel seems to be retreating to the point of view of (neo-Kantian) transcendental constitution of the world on the basis of an immediately experienced temporal symbolism, let us remember that he has closed that avenue of escape. In his own words: "While original pragmatism resolved the image of the world into life from the point of view of the subject only, it [*Lebensphilosophie*—

204. Simmel, "The Conflict in Modern Culture," *op.cit.*, p. 388.
205. Though not within the sphere of culture itself. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 393.
206. Simmel, "The Transcendent Character of Life," *op.cit.*, p. 364.
207. *Ibid.*, p. 367.
208. *Ibid.*, p. 371.
209. *Ibid.*, p. 367.

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Donald Levine] did this for the object as well."[210] In any case, such retreat would simply bypass the problems of his philosophy of culture. But in fact, there is no reason to assume that he is retreating anywhere because a transcendental-empirical ambiguity (form as category, form as cultural product; life as internal basis of unity, life as trans-individual unity, etc.) runs throughout his thought. Only his philosophy of culture (especially in *Die Philosophie des Geldes*) *began* overcoming this ambiguity by a theory of history in which the constitution of cultural objects became the task of objectifying praxis. Within such a theory the constituting (re-creating) activity of the historian could unfold[211] on the same plane as the creative activity of the historical actor. But his discovery of the concept of alienation revealed to Simmel a fragmented and atomized world of one-sided human beings. Unable to locate the historical specificity of alienation, he identified alienation with all forms of creating objects and objective methods. Formulated in these terms, the "tragedy of culture" had to be eternal. Simmel's metaphysics of life was his final codification of this eternal tragedy.

Simmel's last article on the tragedy of culture, *Der Konflikt der modernen Kultur* (1918) traced out six major attempts in the history of thought to totalize human experience as symbolized by the concepts Being, God, Nature, Ego, Society and Life.[212] He insists on surpassing the point of view of society, because theories of society (he is thinking mainly of nineteenth century positivism, but also of what he generally understood to be Marxism, i.e., vulgar Marxism) tend to submerge and dissolve the self and subjectivity in society. The results of his own philosophy of culture confirmed the precarious state of subjectivity in the world of nature. But the *Aufhebung* of alienated thought and alienated culture in the philosophy of life is a false one. Simmel's *Lebensphilosophie* only confirmed the cultural world as the naturalizing positivists implicitly saw it: as an alienated second nature. Or rather, it "surpassed" the dualism of an increasingly fragmented subject and the alienated second nature only in terms of an irrationalist theory of life as attained by immediate intuition. Simmel's re-conceptualization of alienation as the "self-alienation" of life left everything as it was.

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210. Simmel, "The Conflict of Modern Culture," *op.cit.*, p. 387.

211. But only if a contemplative theory of knowledge were abandoned. Unlike Dilthey, Simmel made no attempts in this direction.

212. Simmel, "The Conflict of Modern Culture," *op.cit.*, pp. 378-379.

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Introduction to Krahl

by Patrick Murray

Who was Hans-Jürgen Krahl? As the opening chapter of his book *Konstitution und Klassenkampf* indicates, he was a student from Southern Germany whose life largely coincided with that of the whole German New Left. Born in a backward, almost feudal social context, he originally became fascinated by the promise of bourgeois emancipation. Thus, he moved from the CDU to Heidegger's philosophy, logical positivism, to finally come to a New Left Marxism and a revolutionary viewpoint. After a period of intense theoretical and practical involvement in the turbulent politics of the late 1960s, his life came to an abrupt end in 1970 in an automobile accident—precisely at the time of the decline of New Left politics.

The editors of his notes, essays, and speeches explain their inclusion of "constitution" in the book's title (*Konstitution und Klassenkampf*) as follows: "since this concept, next to that of 'abstraction,' expresses like no other the unity and the difference of the real and ideological conditions of bourgeois society, it is the key to Krahl's theoretical reflections." The critical juxtaposition of bourgeois emancipation and proletarian class struggle in the subtitle (*Towards the Historical Dialectic of Bourgeois Emancipation and Proletarian Revolution*) encapsulates both Krahl's personal history and that of the German New Left.

In a nation where communist theory and organizations had been virtually eradicated, both Krahl and the German New Left grew out of the unfulfilled promises of bourgeois ideology. The shattering of their hopes in bourgeois universal emancipation—eventually unmasked as class-ideology during the 1960s—was their defining experience. All of Krahl's writings center around this theme.

Krahl investigated at length Marx's analysis of the commodity and commodity exchange, where Marx penetrates the bourgeois appearances of equality revealing the exploitation of the working class. This led to the realization that the juridical and police structures that frame this bourgeois picture of equivalent exchange are instruments of class violence. No doubt, the practice of street politics facilitated this recognition, and opened wide the New Left's discussion of the legitimation of violence. The Vietnam war stunned them into recognizing the open oppression of the third world by the industrialized capitalist nations led by the U.S. Linked to the analysis of commodity exchange, but also grounded in the experience of middle class students, came the rejection of bourgeois life in materially wealthy Germany. Consumerism and the threat of economic failure negated the

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freedoms proclaimed by the progressive bourgeoisie to such an extent that even the middle class could not partake of them.

This manipulation and reification structuring advanced industrial capitalism are thematized by Krahl as the irrevocable decay of the bourgeois individual. Krahl inherited this problematic from the Frankfurt School and above all from his teacher, Theodor Adorno. Teacher and student, however, came to this fearful modern fact in historically distinct ways. Adorno *suffered* the disintegration of that individual. It was forcibly imposed upon him and he brilliantly observed the many facets of the decay. This experiece of being acted upon constituted the organization and outlook of his critical theory. Krahl *grasped* the scandal of bourgeois individuality in his political practice in the Frankfurt SDS: "This decay of the bourgeois individual is one of the most essential foundations out of which the student movement developed the anti-authoritarian protest."

This meeting of contradictory formative experiences in the bankruptcy of the revolutionary promises of the bourgeoisie forms the background of this article which Krahl published on August 13, 1969 in the *Frankfurter Rundschau* upon Adorno's death. It remains one of the best sketches of a New Left critique of Adorno and most of the Frankfurt School. Krahl's untimely death prevented a full elaboration of a concrete alternative which, as a result, remains a theoretical task yet to be fulfilled.

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*The Political Contradictions in Adorno's Critical Theory**

by Hans-Jürgen Krahl

Adorno's intellectual biography, even in its most aesthetic abstractions, is marked by the experience of Fascism. The mode in which this experience is reflected—by deciphering from the works of art the insoluble relation between critique and suffering—constitutes the uncompromising claim to negation, while simultaneously setting limits to it. "Damaged life," through reflection on fascist domination as generated by the natural economic catastrophies of the capitalist mode of production, is aware of its entanglement in the ideological contradictions of bourgeois individualism, whose irrevocable decay it has understood; at the same time, it cannot disengage from it. Fascist terror produces not only the understanding of the hermetic compulsiveness of highly industrialized societies, it also violates the subjectivity of the theoretician and reinforces the class barriers against his cognitive ability. Adorno expresses this awareness of the process in his "Introduction" to *Minima Moralia:* "The powers that had driven me away also kept me from fully understanding them. I did not yet admit to myself my part in the conspiracy, which enmeshes everybody who even talks about individual matters while confronted by the unspeakable that is happening on a collective level."

It seems as if Adorno's cutting critique on the ideological existence of the bourgeois individual irresistably trapped him in its ruin. But this would mean that Adorno had never really left the isolation that emigration imposed on him. The monadic fate of the individual isolated by the laws of production of abstract labor is mirrored in his intellectual subjectivism. This is why Adorno was not able to translate his private compassion for the wretched of the earth into an integral partisanship of his theory towards the liberation of the oppressed.

Adorno's socio-theoretical insight that the revival of National Socialism under democracy would have to be considered as potentially more dangerous than fascist tendencies against democracy turned his increasing fear of a fascist stabilization of monopoly capitalism into a regressive anxiety towards any form of active resistance against these very tendencies of the system.

He shared in the ambivalent political consciousness of many critical German intellectuals who project that left-wing socialist action would actually only trigger the potential of right-wing fascist terror which it fights. But consequently, any praxis is denounced *a priori* as blindly actionistic and

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* Originally published in Hans-Jürgen Krahl, *Konstitution und Klassenkampf* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Neue Kritik, 1971), pp. 285-288. English translation by Pat Murray and Ruth Heydebrand.

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the possibility of political critique as such is boycotted, i.e., critique that would distinguish between an essentially correct pre-revolutionary praxis and its infantile expressions in emerging revolutionary movements.

In contrast to the French proletariat and its political intellectuals, Germany lacks an unbroken tradition of militant resistance and thus the historical preconditions for a rational discussion of the historical legitimacy of militancy. The existing domination, which according to Adorno's own analysis has pushed towards new fascist forms [*Faschisierung*] even after Auschwitz, could not be real, were the Marxist "weapon of critique" in need of no supplementary proletarian "critique of weapons." Only then would critique be the theoretical life of the revolution.

This objective contradiction in Adorno's theory pushed toward open conflict and turned the socialist students into political opponents of their philosophical teacher. Regardless of the extent to which Adorno saw through the bourgeois ideology of the value-free search for truth as a phenomenon of commodity exchange, he equally distrusted traces of politically-oriented struggle [*Richtungskampf*] in scientific dialogue.

But his critical option—that, in order to share in truth, thought would have to orient itself spontaneously towards practically changing social reality—loses its edge if it cannot define itself in terms of organizational categories as well. Adorno's dialectical concept of negation moved further and further away from the historical necessity of an objective partisanship of thought, which was present in Horkheimer's specific determination of the difference between critical and traditional theory, at least in his advocating the "dynamic unity" of the theoretician and the dominated class.

Abstracting from these criteria ultimately drove Adorno in his conflict with the student movement into a fatal complicity—which even he scarcely understood—with the ruling powers. The problem of private abstinence from praxis was in no way the only issue involved in the controversy, but Adorno's inability to confront the problem of organization points to an objective inadequacy in his theory, which nevertheless assumes social praxis as a central category in epistemology and social theory.

And yet it was Adorno's thought that communicated to the politically conscious students the emancipatory categories which unveil domination and inexpressably [*unausdrücklich*] correspond to the changed historical conditions of revolution in the cities—conditions no longer determinable by unmediated prejudiced experiences.

Adorno's power of presentation on the micro-level unearthed from the dialectic of commodity production and exchange value the buried emancipatory categories of Marx's critique of political economy, whose power as a revolutionary theory—i.e., a theory that states the construction of society in the perspective of radical change—has mostly been forgotten by contemporary Marxist economists. Adorno's thought on the essential logic of the categories of reification and fetishization, of mystification and second

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nature carried on the emancipatory consciousness of Western Marxism of the twenties and thirties, of Korsch and Lukács, Horkheimer and Marcuse, as it formed itself in opposition to official Soviet Marxism.

In his philosophical critique of the ideologies of fundamental-ontological being and of positivist factualism, Adorno deciphered origin and identity as the dominant category of the sphere of circulation, whose liberal legitimating dialectic of bourgeois morality—the appearance of fair exchange between equal owners of commodities—had dissolved long ago.

But the same theoretical tools which allowed Adorno this insight into the social totality, also prevented him from seeing the historical possibilities of a liberating praxis.

In his ideology critique on the death of the bourgeois individual, there are after-tremors of justified sadness. But in his thinking, Adorno could not immanently (in the Hegelian sense of the term) transcend this radicalized last bourgeois stance. He remained transfixed by it, with a fearful glance at the terrible past—the consciousness that always comes too late to someone who only begins to understand at dusk.

Adorno's negation of late capitalist society has remained abstract, closing itself to the need for the specificity of specific negation, i.e., the dialectical category to which he knew himself obligated by the tradition of Hegel and Marx. In his last work, *Negative Dialectics*, the concept of praxis is no longer questioned in terms of social change in its specific historical forms, i.e., the forms of bourgeois relations and proletarian organization. The withering of the class struggle is mirrored in his critical theory as the degeneration of the materialist conception of history.

Even so, at one time it was programmatic for Horkheimer to attribute theory to the liberating praxis of the proletariat, but the bourgeois organizational form of Critical Theory even then could not establish congruence between the program and its realization. The fact that the workers' movement, first smashed by fascism, then apparently irrevocably integrated by the reconstruction of West German post-war capitalism, changed the meaning of the concepts in Critical Theory. They necessarily had to lose specificity, but this process of abstraction occurred blindly.

Heidegger's historicism as "the ahistoric concept of history" was critically challenged by Adorno's concrete and material history, which, however, faded more and more from his concept of social praxis; in his last work, *Negative Dialectics*, it has evaporated to the point that it appears assimilated into the transcendental poverty of Heidegger's category.

To be sure, in his address to the German Sociological Society, Adorno correctly and emphatically insisted on the relevance of orthodox Marxism: the industrial forces of production are still organized according to capitalist relations of production, and political domination, then and now, is based on the economic exploitation of wage laborers. But regardless of the extent to which his orthodoxy conflicted with official West German sociology, it had

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to be inconsequential, since the categorial forms were not related to concrete history.

This progressive process of abstraction from historical process has transformed Adorno's Critical Theory back to the contemplative and scarcely legitimate forms of traditional theory.

The traditionalization of his thinking makes his theory the voice of reason grown old in history. On the level of his thinking, the materialist dialectic of the chained forces of production are reflected in the concept of a theory in its own chains, inescapably enmeshed in the immanence of its concepts. "If the time for interpreting the world is over, and it becomes necessary to change it, then philosophy takes leave... it is time not for the First Philosophy, but for the last." This last philosophy of Adorno has been neither willing nor able to take leave of its own departure.

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NOTES AND COMMENTARY:

Critical Theory and the Sociology of Knowledge: A Response to Martin Jay[1]

by James Schmidt

The Frankfurt Institute for Social Research has been revived in America as an inspiration for critical thought at the very moment when it has died in Europe as an institution. A successful reanimation of the ideas of the Frankfurt School will thus have to concern itself with the problem of acquiring a mode of thought, not with an exercise in academic nostalgia for heroic positions once taken, lively debates once held, trans-Atlantic migrations once made. One cannot revive the Frankfurt School as a museum, one can only renew its criticisms against the new forms its old opponents have taken. Many of us have attempted to do this in the last decade, at first often without knowing that our objections against our teachers had been voiced before, by individuals whose books we only slowly came to know. Rejecting a mode of social theorizing which remained oblivious to the ideological biases which nurtured it, turning against institutions which concealed their biases poorly, we were forced to find a tradition in which critical reason could find a basis. We were poorly educated for the task: drawing on scattered remarkable teachers, more fortunately educated friends, more experienced elder peers, we tried to re-educate ourselves. These things need to be said, since they form the premises of any discussion of critical social theory in this country, and more particularly of the paper at hand. We are all to some extent intellectual cripples, stumbling around in search of the crutches which have been hidden, attempting to acquire a tradition which has been denied us.

Jay has presented us with a version of the Frankfurt tradition which, though totally digestable, must be denied. Too many of the rough edges have been blurred and the past which is delivered seems useless, since what we are given is the story of a grand failure, perhaps not without ironies, but certainly incapable of providing direction. The *Dialectical Imagination* traced the evolution of the school through energetic beginnings; migration and a resulting esoteric isolation, disillusionment, and intellectual anomie; growing pessimism, gloom, and a gradual abandonment of the Marxian foundations from which the adventure first began. The paper under examination here covers the same course in a shorter compass: an attempt by Marcuse to use Mannheim as a means of illustrating the need for an integration of theory and working class praxis, Horkheimer's refusal to name the agent assigned with the task of changing society; Adorno's alarming pessimism and a general descent into "one dimensional gloom." In each case a past is absorbed as already finished off. In neither case do we find a tradition which, though now past, can still weigh on the brain of the living as a reminder of uncompleted projects, or as a signal of the need for new departures. In what follows I will attempt to indicate the ways in which Jay oversimplifies the nature of the Frankfurt critique of Mannheim, and then move to a brief discussion of the ways in which the questions which emerge very poorly from his discussion can perhaps be reposed as part of the legacy of critical theory for radical

1. This paper is a response to Martin Jay, "The Frankfurt School's Critique of Karl Mannheim and the Sociology of Knowledge," *Telos* 20, pp. 72-89. All notes to this paper are given within the text.

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thought today. Since it seems reasonable to assume that anyone interested in reading this contribution will be familiar with Jay's argument, I will precede these comments with only the barest of summaries of the position under discussion.

The significance of the Frankfurt School's critique of Mannheim lies, for Jay, in the fact that it appears to indicate the ultimate failure of the school to provide a positive grounding for their own criticisms of other theorists' work, a failure which is not limited to their Mannheim critique alone. Commenting on Walter Benjamin's discussion of Klee's "Angelus Novus," Jay concludes, "Fragments of the truth, so the Frankfurt School believed, can be found among the debris, but the whole truth is only visible to the angel as he retreats into the future. An almost Kantian agnosticism about the limits of reason began to reemerge in their later writings. Without a faith in angels or the usefulness of final reconciliations as the ground of truth, however, the rest of us may well be left with the feeling that as in other instances, the Frankfurt School has punctured the claims of rival theoretical positions without, alas, offering a truly satisfactory alternative" (p. 89). This rather sorry state of affairs comes about as a result of a gradual retreat from the theoretical position outlined by Lukács in *History and Class Consciousness* as a response to the "collapse of both positivism and its historicist alternative" at the start of this century and the resultant need to "establish the ground of. . .value systems to fend off relativism" (p. 73). By grounding true "moral-cultural-practical knowledge" (Mannheim's 'conjunctive knowledge') in a specific social "vantage point," Mannheim and Lukács were able to argue that a way around the dilemma of relativism could be found (p. 75). For Lukács this vantage point was represented by the proletariat in its role as the first empirical identical-subject-object in history; for Mannheim the vantage point was occupied by a free-floating intelligentsia capable of synthesizing various viewpoints to attain "totalistic knowledge" (pp. 75-76). Marcuse's 1929 review of *Ideology and Utopia*, despite a number of important objections, accepts Mannheim's general approach, seeing in it a useful reintegration of theory and praxis which neo-Kantian Marxism sorely lacks (pp. 79-80). But already in Horkheimer's review of the following year, the tone of the critique has become more unfavorable and, significantly, a fundamental break with both Mannheim *and Lukács* is made with Horkheimer's rejection of the holism which underlies both theories (p. 81) and with a silence about the agent whose praxis will make social change possible (p. 82). With this latter omission, "the door was opened for what might be described as a neo-Mannheimian solution to the problem of the true and false consciousness" (p. 82). Adorno, in an essay which dates from 1937 (and not, as Jay states, from 1953),[2] also "failed to come to grips with the central challenge of the sociology of knowledge. . . : what is the Archimedean point in which a true consciousness can be said to be grounded?" Since Adorno "abandoned Lukács' faith in the proletariat" and yet rejected Mannheim's alternative of a free-floating intelligentsia, "Adorno offered no real alternative which transcended idealism" (p. 83). Finally, in the 1956 *Frankfurter Beiträge* study, "the problem of the grounding of knowledge was put aside for a more urgent question: the potential obsolescence of the concept of

2. The note on sources at the close of the German edition of *Prismen* (Frankfurt, 1955) indicates that although "Das Bewusstsein der Wissenssoziologie" was first published in 1953, it was *written* in 1937. This is omitted in the English translation, which does not, however, translate the title as "The Sociology of Knowledge and its *Consequences*" as Jay cites (72-73), but rather translates *Bewusstsein* correctly as "consciousness." All future citations will be to the German edition.

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ideology itself." Here, with the Frankfurt version of "the end of ideology," we complete our descent into the Frankfurt School's post-war "one dimensional gloom" (pp. 84-85).

In summary, Jay argues that two general tendencies emerge from the Frankfurt critiques. First, there is a gradual turn towards "an appeal to philosophical truth in a manner uncomfortably close to that condemned by Horkheimer in his seminal essay, "Traditional and Critical Theory," which accompanies the Frankfurt School's abandonment of "a Lukácsian insistence on the relation between truth and action..." (p. 87). This leads ultimately to an ahistorical grounding of true consciousness of the same general variety as that of Habermas' *Knowledge and Human Interests* (pp. 86-87). Second, this shift entails a dramatic alteration in the nature of the criticism of Mannheim, who is now condemned not for adhering to an idealist conception of an absolute truth as had been the case in the Marcuse and Horkheimer essays, but rather is chastized for his relativism (p. 87). And finally, we find also a departure from what Werner Stark calls the "functionalist sociology of knowledge," which was present in Lukács and Mannheim, to a position of "elective affinity," where "ideas and social reality may intersect at times in history and reinforce one another, but there is no simple analogical parallel between them and certainly no causal connection" (p. 88).

But ultimately the Frankfurt School cannot be completely identified with the Weber-Scheler "elective affinity" position since, three paragraphs from the end, Jay finds the "Archimedean point" from which knowledge and action can be mediated. "The Archimedean point of Critical Theory is the reconciled totality that will accompany the end of the story similar to the type of synoptic view one gets at the very end of Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*. Although it is impossible to flesh out this fulfilled condition and give it a concrete substance—an impossibility Horkheimer would come to explain by a reference to the Jewish taboo on naming or picturing God—it functions nonetheless as the ultimate ground of cognition" (p. 88). Which brings us to why Benjamin was fascinated by Paul Klee's angel, and to the problem that "the rest of us," not believing in angels, remain without a "satisfactory alternative since the Frankfurt School has demonstrated the flaws of everyone else's theories, without showing a way out.

But even without a "satisfactory alternative" Jay writes about the Frankfurt School. Where is his "Archimedean point," or less metaphorically, what does he expect from the Frankfurt School, to what extent do these expectations represent those of "the rest of us" (indeed *for whom* does Jay speak), and to what extent has his demonstration of the Frankfurt School's failure helped us to picture another alternative? Perhaps these problems, which will be faced more directly in the final section, can be approached by posing an even simpler one: how does Jay read these essays, what tools does he bring to the exposition which might limit his ability to comprehend what is going on?

Russell Jacoby, in an important critique of *The Dialectical Imagination*, has noted that "Jay's categories are too lazy to follow dialectical thought; against the unfolding of Marxist concepts which is the strength of critical theory, Jay appeals to their worn and conventional form...."[3] Because of the shorter span of the argument in this paper, we have a chance to analyze more closely the weakness of his categories in following the argument which is developed in the works he surveys. Two general tendencies can be observed: first, Jay often substitutes an identification of the intellectual pedigree of a concept for a consideration of the theoretical position which the

3. Russell Jacoby, "Marxism and the Critical School," *Theory and Society* I (1974), p. 234.

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concept entails and second, imported categories are applied indiscriminately, blurring the point of the original concepts they label and thus making for facile statements of identity.

The first of these tendencies can be noted in his discussion of Marcuse's essay. It is by now well known that Marcuse was a student of Martin Heidegger and that in several of his early essays he attempted to reconcile historical materialism and Heideggerian phenomenology. Jay has done his homework and can spot a Heideggerian turn of the phrase as well as anyone. "...Marcuse argued that Mannheim's attempt to judge a theory's worth by its relation to a specific social situation was only partially successful, for there is—and here Marcuse the Heideggerian was speaking—a transcendent dimension to truth. Historical facticity was part of a deeper structural reality which had to serve as the final court of appeal for the validity of a theory, and then only in the long run" (p. 80). Now admittedly, Marcuse's discussion of Mannheim's attempt to link true and false consciousness to "levels of being" (*Seinstufe*) betrays an indebtedness to Heidegger's ontological concerns. But it is not enough to stop there, particularly since Marcuse pushes this Heideggerian outlook in a direction which enables him to make the important criticism that Mannheim's linkage of consciousness to "being" tends to ignore the fact that this historical being must be viewed as not simply a static present, but rather contains potentialities which need to be subjected to an evaluation which attempts to see if the opportunity exists for a revolutionary realization of possibilities which are presently hindered by capitalist organization.[4] By employing a language other than the more recognizably (vulgar or at least tired) Marxist "hindering of forces of production by relations of production," Marcuse is able to suggest that the social totality is not a simple *Gestalt* or harmoniously functioning whole, but rather has a number of different and potentially contradictory aspects. My stress on this point is not gratuitous: here we find Jay ignoring a discussion which throws light on the alleged later rejection of "functionalism" in favor of "elective affinity" simply because of the presence of a readily assignable label.

Much the same point could be made for Horkheimer's "abhorrence of identity theory" (p. 81), which in *The Dialectical Imagination* was classified as a part of Horkheimer's inheritance from Kant via Hans Cornelius, but which could more profitably be discussed, as Alfred Schmidt does, as a means of employing "materialism" in a non-ontological sense, anticipating points which were made much more explicitly in the rediscovered Hegel critique of the *1844 Manuscripts*.[5] But here the niceties of a chronological account are violated and it is much neater to have Horkheimer follow Cornelius than to anticipate a yet unfootnotable part of Marx. Similarly, Horkheimer's reference to the taboo on picturing God (p. 88) is much more easily assignable to a trait of Jewish intellectuals than to the more complex use of it as a metaphor for the different forms in which the future can be experienced in Benjamin's final thesis on the philosophy of history.[6] In all three cases cited here, the tendency to

4. Herbert Marcuse, "Zur Wahrheitsproblematik der Soziologischen Methode," *Die Gesellschaft* VI (1929), pp. 366-369.

5. Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination* (Boston, 1973), pp. 46-47. Jay also states in *Telos* that "an almost Kantian agnosticism about the limits of reason began to reemerge" in the School's later works (89). I assume its previous emergence must refer to Horkheimer's work with Cornelius, but I am not clear what is gained by calling it "almost Kantian." On Marx's materialism, see Alfred Schmidt, *The Concept of Nature in Marx*, trans. Ben Fowkes (London, 1971), Ch. 1.

6. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," trans. Harry Zohn, in

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snap at the obvious parallel to teachers or social situation serves as an obstacle to the more difficult task of understanding how the language of teachers and of a tradition is reshaped and often broken in the articulation of a new theoretical insight.

When pedigrees cannot be traced, the beast in question can at least be submerged under a convenient genus, and scattered throughout Jay's discussion are borrowed categories which serve less to explicate the insights under consideration than to display mastery of other parts of the literature. The use of Werner Stark's categories is among the most damaging. The dichotomy "functionalist"-"elective affinity" might be useful in discussing the difference between Mannheim and Scheler, but its application to the present case serves only to exaggerate the continuity between Lukács' thinking and Mannheim's and to avoid an explication of the relationship between "base and superstructure" which the Institute developed in places other than the critique of Mannheim. In the first case Lukács and Mannheim are said to share a similar notion of the totality simply because both reject a simple causal connection of base and superstructure and argue rather "that culture and society form a totality with analogous interrelationships among its various constituent elements" (p. 78). Hence, when Horkheimer attacks Mannheim's holism in 1930, he attacks Lukács "at least implicitly" and sets the stage for a later embracing of "elective affinity" (p. 81). Jay does not indicate an understanding of the distinctions which exist between the various notions of totality present here and his use of Stark's categories does little to provide him with a basis for developing the distinctions.[7] A dominant theme—one is tempted to say *the* dominant theme—in Mannheim's work is a conception of a social totality which completely subordinates each of its parts to the whole and which can be theoretically reconstructed only by a surpassing of any one part by the series of remaining parts. The metaphor which Mannheim employs constantly, albeit with an occasional reservation, is that of *perspectives* opening onto an object; an adequate perception of the object must include as many of the perspectives as possible.[8] This use of a perspectival metaphor enables us to see, as Jay cannot (p. 87), that Mannheim's position is at one and the same time *both* absolutist *and* relativist. As Lukács noted well in his *History and Class Consciousness*, "...relativism moves within an essentially

Benjamin, *Illuminations* (New York, 1968), pp. 263-264. The argument of these theses comes off rather badly battered in Jay's interpretation, as I will argue below.

7. I have not studied Jay's paper on totality in Adorno and Althusser, so I do not know if its argument would help him here. I have found the following discussions of totality of great use: Karel Kosík, *Die Dialektik des Konkreten*, trans. from the Czech by Marianne Hoffman (Frankfurt, 1967), Bertell Ollman, "Marxism and Political Science," *Politics and Society* III (1973), pp. 491ff and his forthcoming response to critics in the second edition of *Alienation* (London, forthcoming). Also of interest is Paul Diesing's discussion of implicit research ontologies in his *Patterns of Discovery in the Social Sciences* (Chicago, 1971), esp. pp. 129ff, 286ff, and 208-210.

8. A few places where this tendency can be found are in Mannheim, "Review of Georg Lukács' 'Theory of the Novel'," in Kurt H. Wolff, ed., *From Karl Mannheim* (New York, 1971), p. 5, "On the Interpretation of *Weltanschauung*," in *ibid.*, pp. 11, 22, 44-45, "Structural Analysis of Epistemology," in *Essays on Sociology and Social Psychology*, ed. Kecskemeti (London, 1953), pp. 16-17, 25; "Historicism," in *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, ed. Kecskemeti (London, 1952), pp. 88-89, 90, 115-116, 226, and *Ideology and Utopia*, trans. Louis Wirth and Edward Shils (New York, 1955), pp. 68-69, 91-92, 112. This list is by no means exhaustive, nor can it be claimed that Mannheim's view remains the same throughout his early works. There is a vacillation concerning whether the totality is "structural" or "dynamic" throughout the period, although in *Ideology and Utopia* the problem of terminology is sidestepped.

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static world.... it is only meaningful to speak of relativism where an 'absolute' is in some sense assumed."[9] Horkheimer directed his criticism against the idealist notion of a formal, static truth which somehow stood behind all of the various perspectives, noting that the very postulation of this ideal truth destroyed any conception of a material or substantive truth on a historical level.[10] There is no shift in the Frankfurt position in the "later" studies (and here Jay's misinformation about the date of the composition of the Adorno paper only adds to the confusion). Indeed, Jay admits that the defense of classical philosophy, which the Institute saw as at least preserving reason from total subjectivization,[11] is "latent" in Marcuse's "Philosophy and Critical Theory" (1937—the same year as Adorno's study; p. 87). The defense of the notion of an historically embodied, objective reason did not "creep into their writings" as a result of a retreat from an earlier position: Jay's failure to see both aspects present in Mannheim's work (formal absolutism-empirical relativism) can only be explained as either a failure to grasp the full significance of the Hegelian notion of reason, or the result of an overly limited discussion which does not tie the papers on Mannheim to the broader theoretical statements made elsewhere.

One can occasionally find Lukács talking as if he embraced Mannheim's notion of totality. For instance, in the first version of "What Is Orthodox Marxism?" he identifies "the fundamental principle of the dialectical method" with the principle that "the whole takes precedence over the parts, *that the parts must be construed from the whole and not the whole from the parts*..."[12] Yet, most of *History and Class Consciousness* is an attempt to find another way of discussing the totality, and there is a constant search for a means of rejecting both simple atomism and the more complex formal-structural analysis which Lukács had employed in his early study of the historical development of drama. The argument of *History and Class Consciousness* attempts to expand the brief holist rejection of atomism of *Tactics and Ethics* with a more elaborate discussion of how *both* atomism and formalism, as well as their practical political offspring, voluntarism and fatalism, must be rejected.[13] Hence in rewriting the discussion of Marx's method in the new version of "What Is Orthodox Marxism?" Lukács avoids the oversimplifications of his previous assertion of the hegemony of the whole over the part. Lukács now sees the need to begin from individual concrete components of capitalist society and not simply surpass them with a formal whole, but rather link them in a "concrete totality," a theoretical representation of the whole which is not to be confused with an intuition of a formalist whole,

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9. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. Livingstone (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), p. 187.

10. Max Horkheimer, "Ein neuer Ideologiebegriff?" (1930) in Horkheimer, *Sozialphilosophische Studien* (Frankfurt, 1972), pp. 19-22, 23-24, 28. At times Horkheimer does seem to neglect the tensions noted in Mannheim's work in footnote 8 above, but Jay's claim is by no means substantiated.

11. The clearest presentation of this position is in Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason* (New York, 1947), Ch. I. It is also worth noting that Horkheimer responded to Marcuse's discussion of the relationship between Critical Theory and philosophy by stating, that Critical Theory was the heir, not only of classical German philosophy, but of philosophy itself. Cf. "Postscript" to "Traditional and Critical Theory," trans. Matthew J. O'Connell, in *Critical Theory* (New York, 1972), pp. 246-247.

12. Georg Lukács, "Tactics and Ethics," trans. Michael McColgan in Lukács, *Political Writings* (London, 1972), pp. 22. Cf. also p. 24.

13. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 38.

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but rather is the result of theoretical labors which are constantly confronted with the concrete particular.[14]

Thus we must not confuse the Frankfurt distaste for Lukács' notion of an "identical-subject-object" (which indeed Lukács rejected, probably sincerely, after his reading of the *1844 Manuscripts*) with their rejection of Mannheim's oversimplification of the notion of social totality. Jay is at least partially aware of this when he notes that Mannheim's essentially *Gestaltist* notion of the whole goes "beyond Lukács" (p. 75). And it is *this specific notion of totality*—not Lukács' totality; certainly not a "functionalist" sociology of knowledge (which serves only to indicate a night in which all totalities are identical)—which is rejected by Horkheimer, when he argues that "the representation of consciousness as a unified *Gestalt* contradicts its specificity entirely and completely." He states that although such notions may be useful in biology or psychology, "the consciousness of a single human and the 'Weltanschauung-system' of history do not have such a quality."[15] We do not need to impute a residue of a taboo on naming God to Horkheimer's rejection of the harmonious totality Mannheim proposes. The key may be found in a passage which echoes the point Marcuse had made earlier: "History as a whole cannot in fact possibly mean the expression of any one meaningful *Gestalt*. For history is the collection of processes which grow out of the contradictory relationships in human society. These processes are obviously no psychical or *geistige* unity, nor are they the realization of conflicts between mere sentiments, attitudes, styles of thought and systems, but rather their occurence accompanies entirely dissimilar human and extra-human forces."[16] But just as Marcuse's attempt to articulate the contradictory notion of social totalities was absorbed under the label "Heideggerian," so Horkheimer's argument is categorized as a rejection of *both* Lukácsian and Mannheimian totalities.

There are other cases, which need only be noted in passing. Like MacIntyre's miserable and vicious polemic against Marcuse,[17] Jay cannot resist dragging out the phrase "end of ideology" and applying it to the Institute's discussion of alterations in the structure of late capitalist societies (p. 84). Truly a *bon mot*, bringing together contradictory theories, the move epitomizes a flashy dialectics, yet ultimately an empty one. Perhaps an argument could be made that Bell's saga of the decline of agitation in a society where class tensions have abated had some similarities to the *Beiträge* paper's discussion of the historical specificity of the concept "ideology" and the problem of whether a Marxian critique of society is still possible using the society's own categories. Perhaps a serious argument could illuminate the problem by showing us similarities which other commentators have missed, and through the demonstration force a reconsideration of the ways in which a Marxist critique might proceed. But Jay does none of this: the *bon mot* is enough, the identity of the two remains on the level of a name, or better—a bad pun. If it is reasonable to charge that Jay's use of similes, categories, and references carry out a deliberate distortion and weakening of the Frankfurt Institute's arguments, nevertheless, it is reasonable to claim, on the basis of the above, that they do not serve the best interests of a serious theoretical discussion. They either miss the major point completely (by reducing it to a question of

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9. Cf. also the discussion of Hegel, pp. 144-145.
15. Horkheimer, *Sozialphilosophische Studien*, p. 27.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 22ff, also Adorno, *op.cit.*, pp. 33, 41.
17. Alasdair MacIntyre, *Marcuse* (London, 1970), p. 67.

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intellectual pedigree), obscure it under an overly general or irrelevant category, or forsake the discussion completely for a well turned phrase or a learned aside.

In summary, Jay writes about the discussion as an intellectual historian. In place of a theoretical framework he gives us a selective chronology. The connecting thread is a series of articles which discuss Mannheim. They are summarized, a pattern is found, a summary of the pattern is given. One does not explore the theoretical labor which these efforts opened up. Why did Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse all discuss Mannheim? What opportunities for expanding points developed in their other writings did they find in criticizing this particular book? What dangers did they see in his version of "ideology"?[18] Life is short, one cannot say everything in any one article, Jay cannot be blamed for omissions. Yet we can question his good faith in producing a chronology which preserves none of the complexities of the issues he approaches and leaves the reader with no notes on where his guide is being less than exhaustive. For instance, the endless charge of the Institute's failure to explain the basis on which their criticism of Mannheim rests seems rather shallow when Jay fails to give more than passing notice to Horkheimer's lengthy discussion of the problem in *Zum Probleme der Wahrheit* and *Montaigne und die Funktion der Skepsis*.[19] But these essays fall outside the chronology, they are written after *Ein neuer Ideologiebegriff?* and Jay ignores their arguments without telling us why the discussions which they contain are irrelevant to his concerns. Similarly his charge that Horkheimer, unlike Marcuse, fails to name the agent assigned with the task of changing society rather cynically transforms the limits of Jay's discussion into a significant silence on Horkheimer's part. True, the introductory paragraph of the essay, which charges that the meaning of Marxist categories is changed when they are removed from their task of altering society, does not contain the words "working class." But the claim that the omission is significant is misleading when one observes that in "Traditional and Critical Theory" (1937) and "The Authoritarian State" (1940) Horkheimer would attempt to discuss the issue of class struggle and the intellectual's role in it in a way that does not use "working class" as a sacred word to be invoked every few lines to assure readers of the writer's radicalism. These comments should be extended, but Jacoby has already dealt adequately with the strange insistence, present here as it was in *The Dialectical Imagination*, that adherence to a "Marxist" position equals the endless repetition without alteration of the classic phrases which serve to identify a Marxist. Indeed, "Vulgar liberalism bails out vulgar Marxism."[20] If Jay seriously wishes us to reject all deviations from the most vulgar summaries of Marx's doctrine as "revisionist" perhaps there is a response to him which can be written. But one senses that he has no position, that "revisionism" functions as another move in the game of catching categories under labels which keep us from having to follow the labor of the notions they attempt to articulate.

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18. The discussion of the Adorno paper ignores, for instance, Adorno's discussion of fascist tendencies in Mannheim's notion of planning.

19. Both papers are reprinted in Max Horkheimer, *Kritische Theorie* (two volumes, Frankfurt, 1968). An interesting critique of the notion of truth in this period of Horkheimer's work, written from a standpoint sympathetic to Habermas' work, exists in T.A. McCarthy, "On the Problems of Truth and Objectivity in the Early Writings of Max Horkheimer" (Mimeo, Department of Philosophy, Boston University). A publication of this paper would be a meaningful contribution to the debate on grounding which is poorly posed in both Jay's paper and my limited response.

20. Jacoby, *op.cit.*, p. 234.

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In another place it might be intersting to see if there is a style which haunts intellectual history almost like an *a priori* category, forcing it to blur the issues through the devices outlined above. For now, one can only wonder what audience Jay intends to address with this paper: the summaries are too brief and, as I have argued, too much in pursuit of making a one-sided argument to serve as an introduction to the debate to someone who knows nothing about the literature and the conclusions are too compressed for anyone who wishes to pose the problem of grounding critical theory as a serious theoretical concern. One wonders equally which audience he is speaking for when he articulates the feelings of sadness which the "rest of us" feel at the failure of the Frankfurt School to ground its theory. There is a ring of familiarity in his criticisms. Critical theory, having tried to show that any type of contemplative social theorizing is broken by contradictions, having sawed through the props on which all of the well grounded social sciences rest, is now asked to climb up on stilts of its own. Hence, despite the Olympian turns of phrase which Jay's intellectual history of the school often mouths, perhaps there is a real problem which troubles him: he wants to *teach critical theory but finds that it resists the temptation to become respectable and* climb up on the stilts. That Habermas' arguments should appeal to him and indeed even color his reading of the earlier phase of the school should be no surprise: stilts composed of a mélange of Wittgenstein, communication theory, phenomenology and Marx are flashy indeed. Perhaps students will even learn to walk on them.

Why then should critical theory not concern itself with the problem of grounding as Jay has posed it?[21] Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History," so strangely interpreted by Jay, give us a number of clues, and in the brief space which I have here I will attempt to suggest what lines they open up. First, however, it might be useful to note one last peculiarity of Jay's presentation, since the language with which he poses the question of grounding biases not only his reading of Benjamin, but also his presentation of the problem of grounding. Jay sees the major problem arising from the collapse of positivism and historicism (one might note that "collapse" is an overly dramatic phrase for what took place, and unfortunately both traditions live on in various stages of decay) was that of a need to "establish the ground of. . . *value systems*" (p. 73, emphasis mine). One might immediately raise the question of in what sense the Frankfurt Institute ever saw itself dealing with "values" which somehow need a grounded ethical base. Indeed, a key discussion in Horkheimer's "Traditional and Critical Theory" defines critical theory as "in its totality, the unfolding of a single *existential judgment*" based on Marx's notion of the general course of the commodity economy.[22] What is significant here is that the truths to be extracted from this expansion are primarily negations: the unfolding of the judgment does not establish the truth of the existential judgment as a predictive theory, but rather serves as a means of indicating the one-sidedness of the other social theories which claim to have accounted adequately for reality. Jay also refers several times to the need to find a

21. I am not responding to Jay's two other major criticisms as they have been dealt with adequately elsewhere. The charge of "gloomy one-dimensionality" is discussed in its earlier incarnations in other thinkers' criticisms of Marcuse by Russell Jacoby, "Reversals and Lost Meanings," in Paul Breines, ed., *Critical Interruptions* (New York, 1970). Jay's complaint that the Frankfurt School did not unify theory and practice is discussed in Jacoby's review of *The Dialectical Imagination*, pp. 234-236.

22. Horkheimer, "Critical Theory and Traditional Theory," *op.cit.*, pp. 227ff, emphasis mine.

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"vantage point" or an "Archimedean point" and apparently conceives this point as being a place outside the totality of history and serving as a place from which the totality can be contemplated. Indeed, his use of the phrase "ultimate ground of cognition" (p. 88) in connection with his argument that the future reconciled totality is the school's Archimedean point betrays the fact that Jay seeks in critical theory a place from which history may be *contemplated.*

With these remarks out of the way we can turn to his serious misreading of Benjamin's thesis on the "Angelus Novus." Let me quote the passage in its entirety, including the poem which serves as its motto.

> Mein Flügel ist zum Schwung bereit,
> ich kehrte gern zurück,
> denn blieb ich auch lebendige Zeit,
> ich hätte wenig Glück.
> —Gerhard Scholem, "Gruss vom Angelus"

"A Klee painting named 'Angelus Novus' shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistably propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. The storm is what we call progress."[23] Jay is gravely mistaken in identifying the angel's vision with the Frankfurt School and claiming that somehow this passage shows how they sought to view the totality of the past from the Archimedean point of a reconciled future (pp. 88-89). Rather, the passage stresses the *ineffectiveness* of such vantage points. Indeed, "the angel *would like to stay*, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed..." but he *cannot*. With the storm caught in his wings he has no choice but to remain that *lebendige Zeit* (Zohn's translation "timeless time" is not as distortive as one might first think, the stress is on the uselessness of the angel being simply *living time* and not a participant in the lived time of men) where it knows it has "little luck." The shift between the view of history possessed *by the angel* and *by us* echoes Hegel's constant *for us-for it* parallels in the *Phenomenology*, but where for Hegel the contemplative "we" which watches the follies of consciousness represents reason's highest stage, Benjamin's angel recognizes the futility of contemplation and struggles against the storm in hopes of freeing its wings so that it may fold them and remain with *us* (i.e., with Hegel's *for it*) in our non-contemplative, practical struggles in history.

It is dangerous to pull Benjamin's theses out of their context and attempt to buttress one's own points with them. These epigrams from the bleak year of 1940, which were to be a methodological preface to the Arcades project,[24] must be read in their totality

23. Benjamin, *op.cit.*, pp. 257-258.

24. Cf. Shierry M. Weber, "Walter Benjamin: Commodity Fetishism, the Modern, and the Experience of History," in Dick Howard and Karl E. Klare, eds., *The Unknown Dimension* (New York, 1972) for a useful introduction to Benjamin. I disagree with her evaluation of

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if we are not to lose the sense which Benjamin places in them. My quoting them here can only be defended as an attempt to restore some fraction of their original meaning in the light of Jay's reading; a complete exposition of them might wind up entailing an entire study of historical materialism. Each of his parables would demand at least a chapter of commentary. They are, above all, not about a faith in the future, and this reading distorts the main thrust of the Frankfurt School's (and Benjamin's) critique of the blind faith which German social democracy placed in the ultimate victory of socialism. Benjamin, in the thesis immediately following the one quoted above, explains the purpose of the theses in just these terms. "The themes which monastic disciplines assigned to friars for meditation were designed to turn them away from the world and its affairs. The thoughts which we are developing here originate from similar considerations. At a moment when the politicians in whom the opponents of Fascism had placed their hopes are prostrate and confirm their defeat by betraying their own cause, these observations are intended to disentangle the political worldings from the snares in which the traitors have entrapped them. Our consideration proceeds from the insight that the politicians' stubborn faith in progress, their confidence in their 'mass basis,' and finally, their servile integration in an uncontrollable apparatus have been three aspects of the same thing. . ."[25] Only a break with hope for a dawning reconciled totality can lead to a sensible notion of praxis in which the working class is "nourished by the image of enslaved ancestors rather than that of liberated grandchildren."[26]

Benjamin also rejects the notion of grounding knowledge within the individual, arguing that "Not man or men but the struggling, oppressed class itself is the depository of historical knowledge."[27] If one examines the places where Horkheimer does approach the outskirts of the problem which Jay poses one gets an idea of why the mythology of an individual, cognitive grounding of critique is rejected. Horkheimer notes that the seriousness which scholars grant to theoretical activity stems from a false consciousness which elevates the intellectual's own particular interests to the level of a constitutive principle of the whole society.[28] One can understand the appeal of Habermas' grounding of critique in a pure speech situation and his parallel degrading of labor to "purposive-rational action" when one reflects on the extreme rarity with which intellectuals working within the existing division of labor ever encounter any type of interpersonal activity *other* than speech. This should not be read as a romanticization of the labor of the proletariat, but merely as a suggestion that other forms of

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Habermas' significance (pp. 274-275), especially since even Habermas now admits that the argument of *Knowledge and Human Interests* must in turn rest on his pragmatics of the ideal speech situation.

25. Benjamin, *op.cit.*, p. 258. The need to forsake the immediate and false unity of theory and practice of the Social Democrats should be considered in light of Jay's insistence that all moves away from practice are signs of weakening Marxist identity.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 260.

27. *Ibid.*

28. Horkheimer, "Critical Theory and Traditional Theory," p. 198. If idealist philosophy turns the intellectual's experience into a general metaphysics, intellectual history turns it into a romance in which the basic form of action is the release of an idea. In recent years perhaps the style of narration has changed, and intellectual historians treat the adventures of intellectuals with an ironic detachment (hence perhaps Jay's fondness for finding ironies), just as Thomas Mann – according to Lukács – could preserve the novel only by treating its narration with a heavy dose of irony.

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interaction, particularly the general category of labor, could profit from study.[29] Horkheimer also questions the traditional imputation of absolute knowledge to the individual thinking subject, noting that "the thinking subject is not the place where knowledge and object coincide, nor consequently the starting point for absolute knowledge..."[30] These brief comments suggest a range of considerations which lie far outside a grounding of the truths of critical theory in either a projected future or a present speech act.

If critical theory does not ground itself in the future or in the present, one can at least note that the impulse which it manifests toward the criticism of other theories can perhaps find a sort of basis, though perhaps lacking the erudition which Jay and Habermas seek. Benjamin notes "Reflection shows us that our image of happiness is thoroughly colored by the time to which the course of our own existence has assigned us. The kind of happiness that could arouse envy in us exists only in the air we have breathed, among people we could have talked to, women who could have given themselves to us. In other words, our image of happiness is indissolubly bound up with the image of redemption. The same applies to our view of the past, which is the concern of history. The past carries with it a temporal index by which it is referred to redemption. There is a secret agreement between past generations and the present one. Our coming was expected on earth. Like every generation that preceded us, we have been endowed with a *weak* Messianic power, a power to which the past has a claim. That claim cannot be settled cheaply. Historical materialists are aware of that."[31] We have come full circle. The grounding of critical theory must not be sought in terms of ways in which we can provide the explanations which will enable academia to "bank on" its arguments.[32] We should look for its foundations in a reflection on our own origins and not through the use of a language which is as clever and as ironic as Jay's or as sterile and de-eroticized as that of Habermas. In that regard Benjamin might not serve as the worst of guides, and despite the various ritual father-murders which a younger generation of American critical theorists seems to have embarked upon, Marcuse is not the worst of our possible teachers. We recognized the bankruptcy of social sciences in this country before we began to speak in the various tongues critical theorizing provides. Perhaps, before we plunge into Wittgenstein and Searle in search of a new tongue to articulate our ground, what is needed is a reflection on the impulses which first drove us away from conformist theorizing. We need to bring our almost instinctual rejection of the tradition in which we first learned to think to a conscious level, perhaps thereby coming to see parts of our rejection as uncalled for, but perhaps also recovering what now is in danger of being lost: those elements of our history that led us to depart from the timeless time of positive social theory to join the living and recover that original pact which binds us to a past yet, at the same moment, gives us the means to turn against it, negate, and yet preserve it. Unlike the "Angelus Novus" we can pull our wings free from the storm for a return to earth. It is undeniable that

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29. On avoiding the romanticizing of labor see Benjamin, pp. 258-259. In this context Georg Lukács, *Ontologie: Arbeit* (Neuwied, 1973) is of interest as is Marcuse's early study translated in *Telos* 16.

30. Horkheimer, "Critical Theory and Traditional Theory," p. 11.

31. Benjamin, *op.cit.*, pp. 253-254.

32. Horkheimer notes that Critical Theory "...rejects the kind of knowledge that one can bank on. It confronts history with that possibility which is always concretely visible within it" (and not, as Jay argues, which is visible from beyond it). "Authoritarian State," in *Telos* 15.

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parts of Habermas' project seek to account for this capacity, yet we must continue to judge attempts at grounding critical theory not on the basis of the number of trends within the academy which are synthesized, but rather in terms of the loyalty they have as descriptions of this first, perhaps imperceptible, tropism away from ideological conformity.[33]

A history of the Frankfurt School might serve to alert us to these other claims on our weak Messianic power which cannot be taken lightly. Such a history would not leave the school behind as a bundle of ironies, but rather would seek ways of placing it within our present as an ever present claim on our freedom. So, we need a history of the school. But, as Nietzsche notes (in the motto of Benjamin's XII Thesis), "We need history, but not the way a spoiled loafer in the garden of knowledge needs it." To his credit, Jay has produced works which have moved any number of people out of the garden; the criticisms I have placed here will, I hope, serve to prevent too many from turning back at the wicket gate in fear that the entire journey has been ill advised.

33. Perhaps these comments parallel John O'Neill's notion of a "wild sociology" which will remain faithful to the critical intentions of both phenomenology and Marxism without falling into the trap of a ritualized "ethnomethodism" or a critical theory ashamed of its Marxist past.

The Industrialized Traveller

by Wolfgang Schievelbusch

When I mention my research on railroads, people often ask: why railroads and not more contemporary and more important means of transportation, like the automobile and the airplane? My answer is that automobiles and airplanes are important innovations but they are only the successors of the first industrial means of transportation. The decisive qualitative change took place when pre-industrial "organic" travel was transformed into industrial travel. Thus, I am interested in how men adapted to the new means of transportation, i.e., how new forms of behavior gradually emerged to meet the new conditions posed by industrialized transportation. I will try to reconstruct these new forms of human activities on three different levels: the sphere of speculative or philosophical consciousness; the sphere of medicine as the science dealing with the human body and mind; and the sphere of industrial construction and design.

The analysis will begin with a discussion of the twofold development of railways and industrial forms in general. One moment of this development refers to standardizing and levelling of previous, i.e., pre-industrial structures and forms in order to allow the functioning of the industrial form. The second moment of this movement has to do with the fact that industrial forms, despite all their functional standardization, are doomed to at least partially reproduce preceding structures and forms. There are, of course, invariant functional requirements. A steam engine's boiler and cylinder are the same, whether built in Sheffield, New Delhi, or somewhere in America. But

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beyond mere technological requirements there is a broad spectrum of functional forms that are not related to pure technological necessities, but to social and historical conditions.

The introduction of the railroads into nineteenth century economy and society brought the industrial revolution into transportation. In passenger transportation, the old "organic" travelling experience was suddenly transformed into a new "industrialized" mode. Moreover, the assimilation of railway travelling into everyday life pushed the bourgeois middle class into an industrial experience which had hitherto been reserved solely for the proletariat. More crudely put, the bourgeois who travels by railroad does not merely consume *transportation* as a commodity, but experiences directly the concrete features of the industrial commodity through the steam engines and the trains. Whereas ordinarily the nineteenth century bourgeois had and still has no direct contact with ghettoized industrial plants, it suddenly found himself in a factory situation thus experiencing the industrial production of transportation. The phenomenology of this experience is as follows: he enters the railway station. The first section of the station, with its palace-like façade and its entrance hall, does not resemble a factory at all but, with all its renaissance masonry, reflects the realm of bourgeois self-esteem. This situation, however, lasts only as long as there are no trains in sight. As he leaves the lobby and enters the platform area, the bourgeois traveller is suddenly surrounded by factory architecture. Fancy masonry gives way to steel construction, steam engines and other industrial equipment. As soon as he crosses this hall and enters his compartment, our traveller again finds himself in a reconstituted non-industrial bourgeois interior, in a plushly-upholstered cell. As long as the train stands still he can close his eyes and plug his ears to exclude the noisy surroundings and imagine himself in a non-industrial situation. But as the train starts moving, this illusion collapses.

The pre-industrial traveller saw himself as an autonomous individual, directly experiencing the nature he travelled through—a situation which created the genre of the eighteenth century travel novel, shortly before the arrival of railways. This is no longer the case with our railroad traveller. As John Ruskin put it, the railroad traveller feels like a package being shipped. This is how he described it in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, written in 1846: "The whole system of railroad travelling is addressed to people who, being in a hurry, are therefore, for the time being, miserable. No one would travel in that manner who could help it—who had the time to go leisurely over hills and between hedges, instead of through tunnels and between banks: at least, those who would, have no sense of beauty so acute as that we need consult it at the station. The railroad is in all relations a matter of earnest business to be got through as soon as possible. It transmutes a man from a traveller into a living parcel." What Ruskin is describing is the loss of experienced distances, of the leisurely and organic appropriation of space in a time interval adequate to human perception. Between the beginning and the end of a trip one no longer experiences travelling. Rather, one feels like a parcel in a pneumatic tube or in the words of contemporary descriptions of early railroads, one feels like a projectile or a cannon-ball. For a conservative bourgeois writer like Ruskin the railroad not only destroys the autonomy and the individual's sensual experience but nature and natural beauty as well. This is how he describes this process in his *Modern Painters*, written in 1860: "Wherever I look or travel in England or abroad, I see that men, wherever they can reach, destroy all beauty. They seem to have no other desire or hope but to have large houses and to be able to move fast.

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Every perfect and lovely spot which they can touch, they defile." He follows with a footnote: "Thus, the railway bridge over the Falls of Schaffhausen, and that round the Clarens shore of the Lake of Geneva, have destroyed the power of two pieces of scenery of which nothing can ever supply the place, in appeal to the higher ranks of European mind."[1]

Where Ruskin sees only destruction, his contemporary, Heinrich Heine, sees new productive possibilities. He compared the opening of the new railroad line from Paris to Orleans and Rouen in 1843 to the discovery of America and the invention of gun powder. "The railways," he writes, "constitute so major an event which leads mankind to changes in the quality of life... Great changes will now occur in our mind and in perception. Even the elementary concepts of time and space will not remain unquestioned. Space is killed by the railways: we are left only with time. It takes only four and one half hours now to travel to Orleans, and the same time to travel to Rouen. What will fnally happen when the connections with Belgium and Germany will be completed! I already feel the mountains and forests of all countries approaching Paris. I already smell the aroma of German linden trees; I already hear the North Sea surge before my door." Compared to Ruskin's melancholy for the railways' destruction of nature, Heine's outlook is optimistic. He sees the possibilities created by the new means of transportation so prophetically that he can be said to have anticipated the sweet promises of modern tourism according to which the Bahamas can almost be smelled in New York.

Needless to say, the railroads were the dominant industry during the nineteenth century. Like the automobile industry of our century, the nineteenth century railroad industry reshaped the infrastructure and the appearance of the landscape and, moreover, dominated all industrial production. Marx called the railways the *"couronnement de l'oeuvre"*: the crown of capitalism's reconstitution of the world. He wrote: "I call them [the railways] *couronnement de l'oeuvre* not only in the sense that they, along with the ocean steamship and the telegraph wire, were the communication media adequate to modern production, but also because they became the basis for the first large joint-stock companies, and thus the starting-point for all other sorts of joint-stock companies, including the bank corporations. In short, they contributed to the concentration of capital in an heretofore unknown degree..."

As everyone knows, railways were first used in English coal-mining districts. In the seventeenth and eighteenth century these mine railways were propelled by horsepower. In the first decade of the nineteenth century, horsepower was gradually replaced by locomotive steampower, mainly because coal had become a more abundant and therefore more "natural" material than horses in the mining districts. In fact, different countries and differently developed economies reacted differently towards the replacement of animal or organic power by mechanical steam power. In late eighteenth century England, the highly developed mining industries formed a mining landscape which replaced the rural scenery as a living environment and had almost become a kind of second nature. In this non-agrarian country, horses were regarded as food consumers, and food certainly was not as abundant as coal. The opposite was the case in France, where coal mining was almost negligible when compared to England which, in 1816, produced 16 million tons of coal. Only four years later, France for the

1. Compare this with Walt Whitman's accounts for a qualitatively different description of natural beauty in relation to technical and industrial objects.

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first time produced more than one million tons. According to a recent French economic historian, when railroads were first introduced, coal in France was still a revolutionary product. This economic fact resulted first in the late introduction of railways in France, and secondly, in the following statement made, not by a poet or a speculative intellectual, but by a French engineer. Thus, Pierre Simon Gigard in 1825 argued that railroads should not be propelled by steam power but by horses, because the coal consumed by the steam engine would be lost forever, whereas horses fed with natural produce would fit well into the organic natural circle.

As already mentioned, when the industrial railway is moved from the coal mine districts where it serves to transport goods, to the cities where it serves to transport people, early railway travellers generally described the experience as "being shot out of a cannon." The loss of the natural contact with the space travelled through was initially a shock, but gradually people grew accustomed to it and the new experience became integrated into everyday life.

How did the medical profession which concerns itself with the human body and mind deal with the same experience? The earliest known medical comment on railway travelling can be found in *Hufelands Neues Journal der praktischen Heilkunde* beginning in 1836. It was pointed out that the constant vibration of stage-coach travel had been an excellent remedy for certain organic malfunctions such as hemorrhoids and hypochondria. Now, however, the "advantage of this permanent wholesome vibration has disappeared in railway travelling." Strangely enough, this observation is the only published medical opinion on the new development for about two and a half decades. It is surprising because in the late twenties and early thirties, the effect of speed and tunnels on health was a common topic of general public discussion. Common medical wisdom in those days saw a harmony between the "organic" shaking produced in the horse-drawn stagecoach by stones and potholes in the road, and the traveller's organism. Medical authorities feared that this organic balance was destroyed by the new industrial-mechanical movement of the railway.

In the early 1860s the British medical journal *Lancet* published a series of articles on *The Influence of Railway Travelling* on public health. In one of these articles the elasticity of a horse is compared to that of a locomotive: the animal's elasticity is based on its muscles and, clearly, no mechanical machine has muscles. The railway carriage is thus defined as "a framework of bones without muscles." *Lancet* implied that the traveller has to compensate with his own muscular system for what is missing in the railway car's "inorganic" mechanical movement: the higher the speed, the more exhausting the trip. The exhaustion applies to the engine driver as well as to the passenger. The former, being more directly exposed to the process, is more severely affected. This is illustrated by two contemporary medical observations. The first is taken from a French book, published in 1857, by a certain Doctor Duchesne. He speaks of a *maladie de mecaniciens* whose symptoms are as follows: "After ten years of permanent service and under the influence of vibrations, shocks and especially of the constant changes in the atmosphere, they feel pains in their right side. This goes together with a cold feeling in the knee. These pains slowly develop further into the right arm; they are apparently due to the driver's position in the locomotive. However, this rheumatism is not the only pain; there is also a painful numbness accompanied by a feeling of weakness." And later: "This bad influence manifests itself in a deterioration of sight, in the more or less complete loss of hearing, in rheumatic pains...all these symptoms together constitute that peculiar disease which I call *maladie de*

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mecaniciens." Clearly, as the contemporary critics of Duchesne argued, not only train engineers, but industrial workers in general suffer these symptoms—the only difference being the fact that the engineers work with a machine running at a high speed while exposed to weather.

If the engine driver is exposed to this exhausting effect of the machine, the same is true of the passengers. Both engineers and passengers suffer from the shocks and vibrations of the train. Only the upholstery of a passenger's seat as well as the car's springs and walls mitigate his lot. In *Lancet*, another physician diagnosed the *maladie des mecaniciens* in the passenger compartments: "Travelling a few years on the Brighton line very frequently, I became familiar with the faces of a number of the regular passengers on that line. Recently, I had again occasion to travel several times on the same line. I have had a large experience in the changes which the ordinary course of time makes on men busy in the world, and I know well how to allow for their gradual deterioration by age and care; but I have never seen any set of men so rapidly aged as these seem to me to have been in the course of those few years. This was an independent observation made without reference to any investigation then or at any future time to be carried on. The change was so rapid that it forcibly arrested my attention, and I must say that it gave me a strong impression adverse to the practice of such habitually long journeys...as you well know...the hurry, anxiety, rapid movement, noise, and other physical disadvantages of railway-travelling, are peculiar to that method of conveyance, and a railway journey of an hour, at the rate of fifty miles an hour, is almost as fatiguing as a half day's journey on the road." According to this doctor, the number of season ticket-holders went down considerably during the following years. That suggests that the bourgeois traveller can stop the deterioration of his health whenever he wants to, since unlike the engineer, he does not depend on the train as the source of physical survival.

A new kind of physical exhaustion is not the only symptom observed by the medical profession. "To the physical effect," writes the French author Aulagnier in 1857, "moral effects are added." He then compares travelling in a stage coach with railway travel: "In the stage coach, one feels comfortable and is given to the sensations of the exterior... One's look rests comfortably on the various landscapes which one has the time to observe as one likes. During stops in the post-station, the traveller is able to make notes in his diary... And now, what can the railway traveller do! He hardly knows the names of the more important towns he passes through, and he can identify them only by the bell-towers of the most famous cathedrals which appear to him in a similar way as the trees of a distant road." Tied to the loss of the direct contact with the landscape is a change in the behavior within the compartment. There, a parallel loss takes place: loss of interhuman contact and communication during the trip. The old travelling situation of sitting facing fellow travellers was inducive to communication, and it was natural to form a travel-party. Here, the already mentioned travel novel of the eighteenth century found its plots. The plot of the railway movie, on the other hand, usually represents the opposite of this communal experience: mystery, espionage, etc.

As travelling speeds up and the density of the communication network increases, the habit of making trips in *one* car and among the same party decreases. Nobody knows how long his potential acquaintance will remain in the compartment. Silence and anonymity begin to characterize relations among travellers. Georg Simmel described the situation of sitting opposite one another without communicating as follows: "To

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see without hearing is much more disturbing than to hear without seeing. This circumstance is extremely characteristic for the big cities. The interrelations of the inhabitants of the big cities are characterized by a notable predominance of the activity of the eye over the activity of the ear. The main cause for this are the public means of transportation. Before the introduction of omnibuses, railways and streetcars in the nineteenth century, men had never found themselves in situations where they were to look at each other for minutes or even hours without talking to each other." Reading during the trip emerged as a way of avoiding this embarrassing situation. In the record of the French medical congress in 1866, a certain Dr. Soulé observed that: "The most common occupation in the railway is reading. You rarely see anybody enter a train without providing himself with reading-matter beforehand."

The experience of railway travel was seen as a series of losses: loss of sensual experience (of the landscape), loss of communication with fellow travellers, and loss of creative activity. Generally speaking, the individual's structure of behavior and perception is gradually modified by industrial-technical appliances. But, what are the effects of traditional cultural values and of technological and economical necessities on the minds and, subsequently, on the products of those men who construct railways: the engineers? To answer this question, let us first examine how cultural and traditional forms reappear in such products that are generally seen as merely functionally built.

In general, the English and the European railway passenger car was an adaptation of the stagecoach. It is characterized by the compartment in which the passengers face each other during travel. The American version, on the one hand, even though they first adopted the European form, very soon developed their own variety of a railroad car which is radically different from the European. The decisive difference between the American and the European car is that in the former there are no compartments but one continuous space, and travellers do not sit facing each other, but all face in one direction. This car was patented in 1834, four years after the opening of the first railroad line in the United States.

There are two explanations why this version was developed in the U.S. The first explanation is that Americans, being pragmatists, did not care whether the railroad car was reminiscent of the old stagecoach. Instead, they created the most economical and profitable type. There was a substantial difference between European and American economies in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In Europe, land was expensive and labor was cheap, whereas in America land was almost free, while labor was extremely expensive. Accordingly, European railway engineers were forced to construct tracks almost in a straight line, no matter how many mountains had to be tunnelled (to save land). American engineers, on the other hand, built tracks around natural obstacles, thus producing many narrow curves. The traditional European railway car with its two axles was not appropriate for narrow curves. Thus, the Americans had to construct their so-called bogie double-trucks. Each railroad car rested on two of these double-trucks, enabling them to pass through the most narrow curves. Once the double-truck was developed, the length of the car could be stretched almost indefinitely.

It would seem that the American car would have been quickly copied by those countries which, because of their traditional values, had not been able to develop this type of car themselves, but would be happy to adopt it for their profit. Nothing of the sort took place. The American type of car was never adopted in any major European

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country, and it took between thirty and fifty years for a modest compromise to be introduced. As can be seen in contemporary railway and travel literature, Europeans were not willing to give up the privacy of the compartment. Thus, a German author named Weber who in 1856 wrote a standard handbook on railways, criticized the American car for its lack of compartments. He further added that he particularly appreciated that special compartment which is at the end of each car and which in fact is a half-coupe, i.e., half a compartment with no fellow travellers facing across.

Europeans did not want to give up their compartments, although these boxes of privacy proved to be more and more disadvantageous and even dangerous. There was no communication possible during travel. There were no bathrooms and only poor heating (problems present in American cars as well), and the risk of having to endure distasteful fellow-travellers without the possibility of changing compartments during travel. Only after the murder of two prestigious persons travelling alone in their first class compartments in 1860 in France and England, was there any serious discussion concerning the possibility of introducing communication while at the same time keeping the compartment system. Years of discussion ended in a compromise between the European compartment and the American omnibus. The compartment was preserved by constructing a car with a corridor on one side, so that the travellers could enter the compartment from this corridor. This arrangement remains in today's cars.

Yet, to say that America is a land without traditions and therefore able to develop more functional forms than Europe is only half of the truth. America does not have the same old traditions as Europe, but during its history, has developed traditions and myths of its own. One of these traditions is that the penetration of the country was for a long time based mainly on the waterways. The rivers and bays between the Atlantic coast and the Mississippi provided a most ideal network of water-communication, whereas on the land the woods were almost impenetrable. As a result, American land transportation was very poorly developed. While its roads had the reputation of being formed almost exclusively by mudholes, the water transportation had the reputation for being sophisticated and highly developed.

The decisive difference between the European and American railroad development lies in the fact that the European railways were successors of land transportation (stagecoach) whereas the American railroads followed and transformed the tradition of river and canal navigation. The fact that initially American railroads had the same stagecoach-like passenger cars as the English is no counter-argument. When they imported the railway, the Americans *automatically* imported the given railway cars. It took a couple of years for them to find out that this imported form was not adequate for the American environment.

To the same degree that Europeans clung to their impractical but powerfully traditional compartment stagecoach form, Americans, after a short attempt to assimilate the European form, returned to the form of collective means of transportation, traditional in their country—a form which, as it turned out, was much better equipped to meet the functional requirements of the new means of transportation. They returned to it by shaping the new form of land transportation according to the old form of water transportation, or, more precisely, the canal boat. Comparing illustrations of both canal boats and railway cars, one finds an amazing analogy. The interior is in the form of a rectangle, with windows on both sides. These windows have almost the same form. The entrances are on either end of the car as in the boat, and there is a stove in the middle of the boat or at the end of the car.

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The social behavior in a canal boat was obviously different from that in a stagecoach. Stagecoach travellers had to remain in their seats during the trip, whereas boat passengers could walk around. Now, given the dominant modes of travel in Europe and in America, that is, stagecoach travel in Europe and boat travel in America, we can say that social behavior was shaped accordingly. The American railroad passenger car made it possible to transfer the social behavior of canal boat travel into the railway age. As the European railway passenger is still a stagecoach traveller, the American sitting in a railroad car or walking around is still a boat passenger.

To what extent is it possible to discover traditional structures in the most highly developed industrial products, and if we discover them, do we learn something about these modern forms that we did not know before? If so, it may be possible to discover important elements of the old American water- and railroad-structure within the present highway system. In this country, there is a direct line from the river and canal navigation, to the railroad structure, which in turn was transferred into the highway structure. These older influences can be detected if we compare the present European and American highway structures and then reconstruct the historical genesis of both of them.

In 1895, when the railroad network in this country was at the peak of its perfection and its successor, the motor car and the highways, had just appeared at the horizon of history, Francis V. Greene, President of the Barber Asphalt Paving Company, the biggest road construction firm in the world, argued that roads and civilization were closely connected: "At the outset you will naturally ask how it is, if roads are so intimately connected with civilization, that the United States, which claim to be among the most civilized nations in the world, should confessedly have roads so bad that they are justly described as intolerable. But the answer is not far to seek. The United States have the largest and best roads in the world. But they are in the form of railroads. And the construction of these railroads has absorbed so much energy and capital that there has not until now been time to construct good common roads, nor has the necessity for them been evident." To speak of stagnation in American road building during the nineteenth century is almost a euphemism since there was no road building to stagnate. The American consciousness of travel and of distances was shaped by the railroad myth, which in turn succeeded the river and canal myth. The good old European country road had no equivalent in America. The European romanticism of the road is an anthropocentric romanticism, derived from the wanderer and the stagecoach. The American railroad romanticism is connected with the idea of the struggle with nature. (Compare Whitman and Ruskin.) The introduction of the motor road and the highway again reproduced the old European-American difference.

In Europe, automobiles were constructed for the existing narrow roads. Driving became as individualistic as the roads were: one had to stop at intersections and to maneuver through narrow towns. It took quite some time in Europe to introduce junctionless motor highways. In Germany, where it was done first, the *Autobahnen* were administered by the central railroad administration. The word *bahnen* in *Autobahnen* is the same as in *Eisenbahnen*: the German word for railroads. That means that motor highways were not considered as belonging to the old species of roads.

The Americans did not have such difficulties of terminology. The junctionless motor highways did not contradict any old notion of the roads, because there was no old notion. There was only the overwhelming idea or notion or the myth of the railroads as the dominant long-range communications.

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Borrowed Glory: "The Sugarland Express"

by Andrew Feenberg

Everyone knows the feeling. The cars ahead slow down. There is a little twinge of excitement as we wait to see what is up ahead: an accident, perhaps a truck jackknifed alongside the freeway, ambulances leaving the scene, who knows? Then we reach the crest of the wave and look right and left. In vain: there is nothing to see. We accelerate out on the other side, feeling a little guilty about regretting our disappointment. The accident is long since over but cars behind us are already slowing down to see it just as we did in an automatic commemoration of Incident.

Moralists condemn the impulse to slow down and look as morbid: mass man transfixed at the sight of the misfortune of one of his fellows. One thinks of the spectators on the streets of New York urging the poor madman on the roof to "go on and jump!" or, from the angle of the victim, of Arthur Bremer deciding which presidential candidate to kill to make a name for himself.

But the moralists are, as usual, unfair. There is a generosity as well as sadism in the spectator on life. Most people are nearly as fascinated by the good fortune of another as by disaster. The newspapers get closer to the truth with the concept of the "human interest story." Readers are interested in any extraordinary event which touches the life of someone like themselves, whether it is winning the Irish sweepstakes or sliding over Niagara Falls. The human interest story is "human" because it concerns an ordinary human being, not a politician or a star. It is interesting because something out of the ordinary happens to such a person.

There is still something disturbing about the whole phenomenon. The time spent driving to work feels empty and trivial, like a nickel dropped in a rigged slot machine. But for the person involved in the accident alongside the road, this day, this instant was vital. It may have been awful, even fatal, but it was not...nothing. The big winner, like the big loser at the tables of life becomes the cynosure of all the small stakes gamblers who go home nightly with a few dollars less. He deserves to be famous because he has a destiny.

Closeness to fame is tremendously satisfying to ordinary people, even the farthest closeness of the mere spectator. Sociologists tell us that it helps to conquer "anonymity," that scourge of mass society.Condemned to triviality and boredom in his private life, modern man becomes "somebody" when his life intersects with history. The public borrows glory from the human interest story, comments on it in bars and during TV commercials, and escapes vicariously for a moment into a world where something happens.

Director Steven Spielberg has created an interesting film about borrowed glory in *The Sugarland Express*. The story is based on a real incident. In 1969 a young couple kidnapped a Texas highway patrolman in his own car. They led a caravan of police halfway across the state to the home of the wife's parents where her children were living. The husband was killed by the police on arrival, the hostage freed and the wife sent briefly to prison. She was later released on the death of her mother to take care of her children.

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The finely crafted screenplay, by Hal Barwood and Matthew Robbins, departs from the *fait divers* to introduce fictional elements which raise the dramatic stakes. In the filmed version of the story Lou Jean Poplin has lost her baby to foster parents ruled more fit than she by the Child Welfare Board. Driven by maternal love she springs her husband, Clovis, from prison, involves him in a fruitless attempt to reclaim Baby Langston and eventually sends him to his death on the doorstep of the foster home. Meanwhile, thousands of simple people line the route of the hijacked patrol car, fascinated by this break in the contiuum of daily life, anxious to glimpse or touch the "stars" in this real life drama rolling through their communities. The long ride across Texas gains a compelling reason and dramatic context from these alterations in the original story.

The drama in the hijacked patrol car is governed by what the screenwriters facetiously call the principle of "unconstitutional behavior." In real life decency and mutual respect are supposed to diminish tensions and defuse potentially violent conflicts. But tension and conflict is the very stuff of the conventional film story. Without them the passive and skeptical viewer cannot be transformed into a compulsive witness to the excitement on the screen. Conclusion: dramatic construction requires the suspension of decency and respect. Then crises can be made to emerge from "unconstitutional" actions which violate the deepest human rights of some of the participants. Each scene can draw its force from the unequal physical or, still better, emotional power of the characters.

The dynamo of this film is the young mother, Lou Jean Poplin, played by Goldie Hawn. She rules her hijacked patrol car with the single-minded ruthlessness of a dictator. The unfairness is redoubled and rendered sympathetic by the willing submission of her subjects. The hostage, Maxwell Slide, is threatened and used. Yet he changes teams as the film progresses. He begins by menacing his captors with the rigors of the law, but soon participates in friendly small talk, then warns Clovis of the police trap into which he is walking and finally protects Lou Jean from stray bullets as snipers kill her husband.

Clovis himself is unscrupulously manipulated. In his supreme moment he hears Slide's warning and seems to understand it. Yet when Lou Jean, in a frenzy of anticipation, insists that he enter the foster home to get the baby, he stumbles from the car to his death. Neither the film nor Clovis blames Lou Jean. He is more a blind sacrifice to love than her victim.

The Poplins seem to stumble on tragedy without ever clearly understanding what is happening to them. But there is one character in the film who does understand. He is Captain Tanner of the Texas Highway Patrol, the man saddled with overall responsibility for the case.

Tanner wants to enforce the law but even more he wants to save the hostage, one of his own men. To avoid driving the kidnappers to a dangerous despair he accepts a trade-off: the baby for the hostage. He gives his word of honor to Clovis but he cannot live up to it. Lou Jean's crime calls forth Tanner's treachery. Tanner's aide asks him, "You ain't really gonna let them take that baby, are you?" And then it is clear that Tanner's responsibilities extend also to a child whom he cannot return to parents hell-bent on self-destruction. He replies, in anguish, "I don't see how we can do that."

All Tanner can do is prolong the agony in the hope that the kidnappers will end it voluntarily, without bloodshed. He is trapped by this hope into encouraging Lou Jean and Clovis to go on when what he would most like is to discourage them into surrendering.

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But there is no easy way out for Tanner. His long waiting game is extremely hazardous. Outside the patrol car another drama is taking place. As the "Express" wends its way across the blasted landscape of Texas the observers are caught up in the excitement. The Poplin's escapade releases all the ignoramuses from the hold of daily habits. A mass frenzy surrounds their passage, shaking whole communities from the perpetual siesta in which they slumber. Civilization, or what this end of Texas uses for it, breaks down as hotheads hunt the Poplins and sentimentalists line the streets to cheer them on.

Against this background Tanner appears as a voice of reason in a country of madmen. He wins the right to rule by his conscientious attempt to maintain order against sheer anarchy, to protect lives while all around him are swept up in the storm. His responsibility becomes total. He represents the interests of Society against the disruptive forces unleashed by the Poplins.

But *what* society does he represent? Certainly not the Texas backwoods in which the movie takes place. The film, like Tanner himself, is slightly condescending toward these rural vestiges of an older America. Indeed some measure of condescension seems inevitably to infect films like *Bonnie and Clyde*, *Five Easy Pieces, Badlands*, and this one. The intention of the makers may not be to patronize the characters but to display their universal humanity beyond social type and stereotype. Yet the viewers' glance is never innocent.

For the urban spectator in a bourgeois society the rural individual has all the low-comic potential of servants in aristocratic theater. *The Sugarland Express* does not fail to exploit this potential, especially in the characterization of Lou Jean. There she is: taking out her chewing gum to kiss her husband and putting it in again when the kiss ends in an argument, pulling an endless stream of Texas Gold Stamps from a gas station dispenser while dozens of police cars idle in the background, putting her hair in curlers in the back of the hijacked patrol car as she rushes to her doom.

If the hero of the Western is not seen in this light as an ignorant hick, it is only because of his mythic stature as a member of what Sergio Leone called "the ancient race of men."[1] The heroes of the "Rural" are presented more or less realistically as people like ourselves but even less able than we are to criticize and cope with the modern world.

In fact Lou Jean can scarcely understand the bureaucratic tangle in which her baby has been lost. Her account of the problem is so confused we can readily imagine that she has made a tragic error, that the baby would be hers again if only she would file the right form in the right office. Clovis, according to the screenplay, is "a farm boy without too much hay in his loft." Slide wears a uniform but he and Clovis are cultural equivalents. They could change places without changing the substance of the film. And the people who line the highways, join the caravan, hunt down the Poplins are all lost souls, living in a fantasy world unwittingly created by Lou Jean, not in the "technetronic" jungle of modern urban America.

In contrast, Tanner is the only modern man with a major role in the film, the only person with roots in the world we live in. He first appears in what looks like a big city courtroom wearing a suit and tie. He would be at home in the glass towers of Dallas where economic and political decisions are made.

There is thus a bit of Kipling's "white man's burden" in the portrayal of Tanner.

1. In *Once Upon a Time in the West.*

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There have always been southerners who complained of colonization by the industrial North. *The Sugarland Express* justifies this imagery by depicting an almost colonial society in the throes of a terrible crisis. Tanner is forced by the insanity around him to play the role of colonial master, enforcing the harsh discipline of a foreign, rational culture on populations of ignorant—and restless—natives.

This conservative imagery is gratuitously threatened by *Bonnie and Clyde* liberalism through an unfortunate mistake in casting. For a moment it seems as if the rich and unsympathetic foster parents are the villains of the piece. They would make good villains: there is an evil step-mother who has only to touch Baby Langston to make him cry, and a Connally-image stepfather whose only line is vicious and vengeful. All we need is a blood-curdling sneer or two from Tanner to be thrust into a tale of class conflict and legal kidnapping of the children of the poor. Had the foster parents themselves been respectable poor there would be no temptation to view the film as concerned with class issues.

In fact it is not, as everything about Tanner is meant to prove. The film is determined to capture our sympathy for this "good cop" who has not killed a man in eighteen years on the force. He quickly figures out that Lou Jean and Clovis are just irresponsible kids, and delays as long as he can the fatal bullet that finally kills Clovis and brings the "Express" to a halt. This strong and reassuring representative of Order bears no ill will toward the criminal he must execute. The rather sentimental ending also contributes to banishing social content from the film in an effort to insure it a purely human significance.

Yet *The Sugarland Express* cannot completely escape from its own social message. The world of the film is a hopeless one, an almost Kafkaesque system of misunderstanding and retribution. The rigid society of the film is beyond redemption, even in the hope of rebellion and change. So great is the gap between the consciousness of the protagonists and the reality around them that no political protest against their condition is imaginable. Here instant stardom and borrowed glory provide a momentary compensation for ignorant people unable to deal with a society they cannot begin to understand.

Thus the chaos and conflict sparked by the Poplins never achieve the political level. The issue is always the crime and never its causes. Each spectator chooses sides, some for the Poplins, some against, and it is this active engagement that takes the place of political struggle.

"OUR NAME IS POPLIN TOO" read the red letters painted on an old bed sheet as the caravan passes by. Two hunters dream of bringing them down: what a story that would be. We know no reasons for these choices. But whether the urge is to kiss or kill Lou Jean and Clovis the people line up along their route full of excitement, each seeking to share in the event, to borrow a little glory from it. We can imagine these bit players in the great human interest story of life basking later in the reflected light of the Poplins' fame as they return to off-screen lives of dreary anonymity.

The film is "framed" in a way which refuses us any image of the colonial powers back in the cities, the rulers of this barren land and people. Their exclusion is *dramatically* justified for they are never objects of struggle. The injustices they may have committed are not even perceived as such by the Poplins and those who line the roads.

The conventional story form seems to force the film-maker's hand in contact with this sort of material. The film's content provides no opening onto a sociology of the chracters and their dilemma. They are depicted in frozen postures of reason and

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emotion, lawfulness and criminality, civilization and anarchy. No mediation within the drama itself can release them from the grip of these ideal forms.

The story therefore moves inexorably toward a conservative conclusion: the "people" are not yet ready for "self-rule," nor even the struggle for it. Maybe in 50 years, if ever, they will be able to manage their own affairs—then they can confront the powers that be—but for the moment they are safer from themselves and each other contained by Tanner and the law, by a modern world they cannot comprehend.

The exclusion of the "colonizers," indeed of politics in general, is a "structuring absence" in this film, in much the sense intended by the famous *Cahiers du Cinéma* article on *Young Mr. Lincoln*.[2] It is not that *The Sugarland Express* should have included a dramatically extraneous political content in order to conform with the wishes of progressive viewers and critics. Rather, the whole structure of the film, as it moves from crime to retribution, depends for its effect on the *absence* from the scene of the socio-economic forces which first set the stage for the drama by creating the conditions for the crime and arming the law against it. The intrusion of these forces would disorganize the narration and gut the characters of the mythic dimension they gradually acquire as embodiments of unambiguous, opposed principles.

And yet *The Sugarland Express*, even without violating the canons of crime-does-not-pay narration, is much more than its own banal moral. It is the desperate energy of Lou Jean's struggle that places the whole film in tension with the stylized conventions to which it outwardly conforms. Her defeat is superficially justified but the viewer feels that he too has lost in the end. In the final scene the memory of her agony threatens the standardized law and order conclusion and, in revealing its cruelty, transforms it into an elegy.

Silhouetted by the setting sun against the Rio Grande, the heavy-set Tanner contrasts as a fatherly figure with the youthful image of Slide. Clovis is dead. Tanner returns Slide's gun to him: the episode is now ended which began when this little prop was misplaced. Slide says, "He took my gun, but he was never gonna use it." These two men have alone understood what happened and been changed by it. The law and order they represent triumphs with hollow sadness in their persons. Order is re-established as Fortinbras enters for the final scene of *Hamlet*, but so much has been lost along the way.

Of course the film does not ask us to take Lou Jean's "side" in romantic protest against society; the necessity of her defeat is compelling. Artistically, this film challenges not society, an object it could never touch in any case, but the triumphant stereotype of the conventional Hollywood narration through which society rules the cinema.[3]

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2. "What will be attempted here through a re-scansion of these films... is to make them say what they have to say *within* what they leave unsaid, to reveal their constituent lacks; these are neither faults in the work... nor a deception on the part of the author; ... they are *structuring absences*...." *Cahiers du Cinéma*, No. 233, 1970.

3. Adorno and Horkheimer propose that it is in style that the dominant social system expresses its power in the artistic domain. This is transparently clear in cinema, which in bad works reduces to a pure stylistic exercise, the simple deployment of a stereotype. The path from the interests of the ruling class to the official prohibition on showing crime pay in cinema to the stylistic conventions that govern narration in typical Hollywood films is an easy one to follow. The authors remark: "That factor in a work of art which enables it to transcend reality certainly cannot be detached from style; but it does not consist of the harmony actually realized, of any doubtful unity of form and content, within and without, of individual and

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Indeed, so conscious of this was the studio that produced it that for some time before the film's release there was talk of providing it with a more optimistic conclusion. Had this line won out and a new scene been added in which we saw, for example, Lou Jean mourning Clovis but holding a happy Baby Langston in her arms, then all the ambiguity of the film would have been lost in false compassion and moral compromise. As it stands the integrity of this film, whatever makes it serious and valuable, lies entirely in its ruthlessness. *The Sugarland Express* is not a political film but it displays intolerable tensions for which it finds no resolution. An upbeat ending would have transformed it into reactionary junk.

Does the film then make some deeper statement about reality, beneath the surface of its conventional narration? The conflict between Tanner and Lou Jean invites generalization. He is not the undivided moral locus of the film: he is its rational "head" in contrast with Lou Jean, who asserts the unqualified rights of the "heart." Is the film a comment on the alienation of reason and feeling or, in social terms, on "the dilemma of modern man in a technocratic society?"

It would be a mistake to turn it into a mere analogue for larger problems. It remains specific, committed to its characters and their situation and does not even hint that it should be taken as an image of the modern world. Yet there is nothing specifically Texan about the central phenomenon with which the film is concerned. In fact, this film like most others is a product of the most massive, organized and commercially profitable business ever dedicated to the proposition that borrowed glory is the substance of life: Hollywood.

In this respect *The Sugarland Express* seems consciously to comment on itself as entertainment. Hollywood creates stars and spectators as does Lou Jean. She produces, directs and stars in her own drama until the law stops the show. As the caravan approaches the small town of Rodrigo, Tanner learns that its streets are full of eager spectators. He pleads with Clovis to pull over and wait until the town is cleared. But Lou Jean protests, "I like the people. I want to see the people and I'll betcha five dollars the people want to see us." And so we do.

At the dawn of the era of talking pictures, the German critic Walter Benjamin wrote that film confirms "modern man's legitimate claim to being reproduced."[4] In the film age fame loses its aristocratic alibis as ordinary people turn into stars and stars into ordinary people. Everyone has a right to be seen, to be famous, regardless of birth, merit or achievement. All this Lou Jean instinctively understands. Everyone can get on "The Sugarland Express."

Of course, Lou Jean does not "represent" Hollywood. She shares in some mysterious force which makes Hollywood possible. The Film Capital's mission is to create imaginary events which count as breaks in the dull continuum of daily life. Like Lou Jean the people who make movies release us in another world from the chains of boredom and impotence in this one, create spectacles that can serve as substitutes for freedom and power. And Hollywood sinks its roots in the very same soil of disruption

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society; it is to be found in those features in which discrepancy appears: in the necessary failure of the passionate striving for identity. Instead of exposing itself to this failure in which the style of the great work of art has always achieved self-negation, the inferior work has always relied on its similarity with others—on a surrogate identity." *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), p. 1312.

4. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken, 1969), p. 232.

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as "The Sugarland Express." However conservative its conclusions, its fantasies contain an obscure threat to propriety and order, parading criminals and madmen before us as more or less attractive heroes, toying with sexual license and violence, ignoring all the rules of taste in the pursuit of effect. Like Lou Jean, the movies must be policed and controlled, by codes of ethics, ratings and community standards, by, ultimately, its own stylistic conventions.[5]

The temptation to pursue the analogy must be resisted. Hollywood may be playing with fire, but it is an always controlled blaze burning out only useless brush. And the spectators are rarely lost on a by-way so far from the main road of progress as the characters of *The Sugarland Express*. Real films never have the power over their audiences that Lou Jean wields over those who line her route, but then neither is cinema so dangerous to its makers and society.

Perhaps this film is less an image of society or Hollywood than a fantasy about the power and limits of film-making. *The Sugarland Express* seems to hint at a dream of its creators, at an identity and social function extrapolated from the actual place of cinema in modern society.

The makers of this film might say of their heroine, as Flaubert said of Madame Bovary, "Lou Jean, *c'est moi.*" In the fondest fantasies of movie-makers, in their secret dreams of omnipotence this may be literally true. The film god provokes and in that very act contains all the centripetal forces of society, ritualizes and thereby overcomes the lapses of order which threaten civilized life while making it tolerable. Even omnipotent the cinema does not really challenge power: it trails a policeman behind the camera.

"He took my gun, but he was never gonna use it."

5. An instructive illustration of the ambiguity of the portrayal of criminality in film is to be found in Robert Warshow's "The Gangster as Tragic Hero" in *The Immediate Experience* (New York: Doubleday, 1962).

Organized Labor versus "The Revolt Against Work:" The Critical Contest

by John Zernan

Serious commentators on the labor upheavals of the Depression years seem to agree that disturbances of all kinds, including the wave of sit-down strikes of 1936 and 1937, were caused by the 'speed-up' above all.[1] Dissatisfaction among production workers with their new CIO unions set in early, however, mainly because the unions made no efforts to challenge management's right to establish whatever kind of work methods

1. See Herbert Harris, *American Labor* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939), p. 272; Sidney Fine, *Sitdown* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969), p. 55; Mary Vorse, *Labor's New Millions* (New York: Modern Age Books, 1938), p. 59; Charles Walker, "Work Methods, Working Conditions and Morale," in A. Kornhauser, et al, eds., *Industrial Conflicts* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1954), p. 345.

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and working conditions they saw fit. The 1945 *Trends in Collective Bargaining* study noted that "by around 1940" the labor leader had joined the business leader as an object of "widespread cynicism" to the American employee.[2] Later in the 1940s C. Wright Mills, in his *The New Men of Power: America's Labor Leaders*, described the union's role thusly: "the integration of union with plant means that the union takes over much of the company's personnel work, becoming the discipline agent of the rank-and-file."[3]

In the mid-1950s, Daniel Bell realized that unionization had not given workers control over their job lives. Struck by the huge, spontaneous walk-out at River Rouge in July, 1949, over the speed of the Ford assembly line, he noted that "sometimes the constraints of work explode with geyser suddenness."[4] And as Bell's *Work and Its Discontents* (1956) bore witness that "the revolt against work is widespread and takes many forms,"[5] so had Walker and Guest's Harvard study, *The Man on the Assembly Line* (1953), testified to the resentment and resistance of the men on the line. Similarly, and from a writer with much working class experience himself, was Harvey Swados' "The Myth of the Happy Worker," published in *The Nation*, August, 1957.

Workers and the unions continued to be at odds over conditions of work during this period. In auto, for example, the 1955 contract between the United Auto Workers and General Motors did nothing to check the 'speed-up' or facilitate the settlement of local shop grievances. Immediately after Walter Reuther made public the terms of the contract he's just signed, over 70% of GM workers went on strike. An even larger percentage 'wildcatted' after the signing of the 1958 agreement because the union had again refused to do anything about the work itself. For the same reason, the auto workers walked off their jobs again in 1961, closing every GM and a large number of Ford plants.[6]

Paul Jacobs' *The State of the Unions*, Paul Saltan's *The Disenchanted Unionist,* and B.J. Widick's *The Triumphs and Failures of Unionism in the United States* were some of the books written in the early 1960s by pro-union figures, usually former activists, who were disenchanted with what they had only lately and partially discovered to be the role of the unions. A black worker, James Boggs, clarified the process in a sentence: "Looking backwards, one will find that side by side with the fight to control production, has gone the struggle to control the union, and that the decline has taken place simultaneously on both fronts."[7] What displeased Boggs, however, was lauded by business. In the same year that his remarks were published, *Fortune*, American capital's most authoritative magazine, featured as a cover story in its May, 1963 issue Max Way's "Labor Unions Are Worth the Price."

But by the next year, the persistent dissatisfaction of workers was beginning to assume public prominence, and a June, 1964 *Fortune* article reflected the growing

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2. S.T. Williamson and Herbert Harris, *Trends in Collective Bargaining* (New York: The Twentieth Century Fund, 1945), p. 210.
3. C. Wright Mills, *The New Men of Power: America's Labor Leaders* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1948), p. 242.
4. Daniel Bell, "Work and Its Discontents," *The End of Ideology* (New York: The Free Press, 1960), p. 240.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 238.
6. Stanley Weir, *USA—The Labor Revolt* (Boston: New England Free Press, 1969), p. 3.
7. James Boggs, *The American Revolution: Pages From a Negro Worker's Notebook* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1963), p. 32.

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pressure for union action: "Assembly-line monotony, a cause reminiscent of Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times*, is being revived as a big issue in Detroit's 1964 negotiations,"[8] it reported.

In the middle-1960's another phenomenon was dramatically and violently making itself felt. The explosions in the black ghettoes appeared to most to have no connection with the almost underground fight over factory conditions. But many of the participants in the insurrections in Watts, Detroit and other cities were fully employed, according to arrest records.[9] The struggle for dignity in one's work certainly involved the black workers, whose oppression was, as in all other areas, greater than that of non-black workers. Jessie Reese, a Steelworkers' union organizer, described the distrust his fellow blacks felt toward him as an agent of the union: "To organize that black boy out there today you've got to prove yourself to him, because he don't believe nothing you say."[10] Authority is resented, not color.[11]

Turning to more direct forms of opposition to an uncontrolled and alien job world, we encounter the intriguing experience of Bill Watson, who spent 1968 in an auto plant near Detroit. Distinctly post-union in practice, he witnessed the systematic, planned efforts of the workers to substitute their own production plans and methods for those of management. He described it as "a regular phenomenon" brought out by the refusal of management and the UAW to listen to workers' suggestions as to modifications and improvements in the product. "The contradictions of planning and producing poor quality, beginning as the stuff of jokes, eventually became a source of anger... temporary deals unfolded between inspection and assembly and between assembly and trim, each with planned sabotage... the result was stacks upon stacks of motors awaiting repair... it was almost impossible to move... the entire six-cylinder assembly and inspection operation was moved away—where new workers were brought in to man it. In the most dramatic way, the necessity of taking the product out of the hands of laborers who insisted on planning the product became overwhelming."[12]

The extent and coordination of the workers' own organization in the plant described by Watson was very advanced indeed, causing him to wonder if it wasn't a glimpse of a new social form altogether, arising from the failure of unionism. Stanley Weir, writing at this time of similar if less highly developed phenomena, found that "in thousands of industrial establishments across the nation, workers have developed informal underground unions" due to the deterioration or lack of improvement in the quality of their daily job lives."[13]

Until the 1970s—and very often still—the wages and benefits dimension of a work dispute, that part over which the union would become involved, received almost all the attention. In 1965 Thomas Brooks observed that the "apathy" of the union member stemmed from precisely this false emphasis: "...grievances on matters apart from wages are either ignored or lost in the limbo of union bureaucracy."[14] A few

8. E.K. Faltermayer, "Is Labor's Push More Bark Than Bite?" *Fortune* (June, 1964), p. 102.
9. J.C. Leggett, *Class, Race, and Labor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 144.
10. Staughton Lynd, ed., *Personal Histories of the Early CIO* (Boston: New England Free Press, 1971;, p. 23.
11. Stanley Aronowitz, *False Promises: The Shaping of American Working Class Consciousness* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973), pp. 44-46.
12. Bill Watson, "Counter-Planning on the Shop Floor," *Radical America* (May-June, 1971), p. 78.
13. Weir, *op.cit.*, p. 2.
14. Thomas R. Brooks, "Labor: The Rank-and-File Revolt," *Contemporary Labor Issues*, Fogel and Kleingartner, eds. (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1966), p. 321.

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years later, Dr. David Whitter, industrial consultant to GM, admitted, "That [more money] isn't all they want; it's all they can get."[15]

As the 1960s drew to a close, some of the more perceptive business observers were about to discover this distinction and were soon forced by pressure from below to discuss it publicly. While the October, 1969, *Fortune* stressed the preferred emphasis on wages as the issue in Richard Armstrong's "Labor 1970: Angry, Aggressive, Acquisitive" (while admitting that the rank and file was in revolt "against its own leadership, and in important ways against society itself"), the July, 1970 issue carried Judson Gooding's "Blue-Collar Blues on the Assembly Line: Young auto workers find job disciplines harsh and uninspiring, and they vent their feelings through absenteeism, high turnover, shoddy work, and even sabotage. It's time for a new look at who's down on the line."

With the 1970s there has at last begun to dawn the realization that on the most fundamental issue, control of the work process, the unions and the workers are very much in opposition to each other. A St. Louis Teamster commented that traditional labor practice has as a rule involved "giving up items involving workers' control over the job in exchange for cash and fringe benefits."[16] Acknowledging the disciplinary function of the union, he elaborated on this time-honored bargaining: "Companies have been willing to give up large amounts of money to the union in return for the union's guarantee of no work stoppages." Daniel Bell wrote in 1973 that the trade union movement has never challenged the organization of work itself, and summed up the issue thusly: "The crucial point is that however much an improvement there may have been in wage rates, pension conditions, supervision, and the like, the conditions of work themselves—the control of pacing, the assignments, the design and layout of work—are still outside the control of the worker himself."[17]

Although the position of the unions is usually ignored, since 1970 there has appeared a veritable deluge of articles and books on the impossibility to ignore rebellion against arbitrary work roles. From the covers of a few national magazines: Barbara Garson's "The Hell With Work," *Harper's*, June, 1972; *Life* magazine's "Bored On the Job: Industry Contends with Apathy and Anger on the Assembly Line," September 1, 1972; and "Who Wants to Work?" in the March 26, 1973 *Newsweek*. Other articles have brought out the important fact that the disaffection is definitely not confined to industrial workers. To cite just a few: Judson Gooding's "The Fraying White Collar" in the December, 1970 *Fortune*, Timothy Ingram's "The Corporate Underground," in *The Nation* of September 13, 1971, Marshall Kilduff's "Getting Back at a Boss: The New Underground Papers," in the December 27, 1971 *San Francisco Chronicle*, and Seashore and Barnowe's "Collar Color Doesn't Count," in the August, 1972 *Psychology Today*.

In 1971 *The Workers*, by Kenneth Lasson, was a representative book, focusing on the growing discontent via portraits of nine blue-collar workers. *The Job Revolution* by Judson Gooding appeared in 1972, a management-oriented discussion of liberalizing work management in order to contain employee pressure. The *Report of a Special Task Force to the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare* on the problem, titled *Work in America*, was published in 1973. Page 19 of the study admits

15. William Serrin, "The Assembly Line," *The Atlantic* (October, 1971), p. 73.
16. George Lipsitz, "Beyond the Fringe Benefits," *Liberation* (July-August, 1973), p. 33.
17. Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 144.

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the major facts: "...absenteeism, wildcat strikes, turnover, and industrial sabotage [have] become an increasingly significant part of the cost of doing business." The scores of people interviewed by Studs Terkel in his *Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel about What They Do* (1974), reveal a depth to the work revolt that is truly devastating. His book uncovers a nearly unanimous contempt for work and the fact that active resistance is fast replacing the quiet desperation silently suffered by most. From welders to editors to former executives, those questioned spoke up readily as to their feelings of humiliation and frustration.

If most of the literature of "the revolt against work" has left the unions out of their discussions, a brief look at some features of specific worker actions from 1970 through 1973 will help underline the comments made above concerning the necessarily anti-union nature of this revolt.

During March, 1970, a wildcat strike of postal employees, in defiance of union orders, public employee anti-strike law, and federal injunctions, spread across the country disabling post offices in more than 200 cities and towns.[18] In New York, where the strike began, an effigy of Gus Johnson, president of the letter carriers' union local there, was hung at a tumultous meeting on March 21 where the national union leaders were called "rats" and "creeps."[19] In many locations, the workers decided to not handle business mail, as part of their work action, and only the use of thousands of National Guardsmen ended the strike, major issues of which were the projected layoff of large numbers of workers and methods of work. In July, 1971, New York postal workers tried to renew their strike activity in the face of a contract proposal made by the new letter carrier president, Vincent Sombrotto. At the climax of a stormy meeting of 3,300 workers, Sombrotto and a lieutenant were chased from the hall and down 33rd Street, narrowly escaping 200 enraged union members, who accused them of "selling out" the membership.[20]

Returning to the Spring of 1970, 100,000 Teamsters in 16 cities wildcatted between March and May to overturn a national contract signed March 23 by IBT President Fitzsimmons. The ensuing violence in the Middle West and West Coast was extensive, and in Cleveland involved no less than a thirty-day blockade of main city thoroughfares and 67 million dollars in damages.[21]

On May 8, 1970, a large group of hard-hat construction workers assaulted peace demonstrators in Wall Street and invaded Pace College and City Hall itself to attack students and others suspected of not supporting the prosecution of the Vietnam war. The riot, in fact, was supported and directed by construction firm executives and union leaders,[22] in all likelihood to channel worker hostility away from themselves. Perhaps alone in its comprehension of the incident was public television (WNET, New York) and its "Great American Dream Machine" program aired May 13. A segment of that production uncovered the real job grievances that apparently underlied the affair. Intelligent questioning revealed, in a very few minutes, that "commie punks" were not wholly the cause of their outburst, as an outpouring of gripes about unsafe working conditions, the strain of the work pace, the fact that they could be fired at any

18. Jeremy Brecher, *Strike!* (San Francisco: Straight Arrow Press, 1972), p. 271.
19. *Washington Post*, March 27, 1970.
20. *Workers World*, July 30, 1971.
21. *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, May 11, 1970.
22. Fred Cook, "Hard-Hats: The Rampaging Patriots," *The Nation* (June 15, 1970), pp. 712-719.

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given moment, etc., was recorded. The head of the New York building trades union, Peter Brennan, and his union official colleagues were feted at the White House on May 26 for their patriotism – and for diverting the workers? – and Brennan was later appointed Secretary of Labor.

In July, 1970, on a Wednesday afternoon swing shift a black auto worker at a Detroit Chrysler plant pulled out an M-1 carbine and killed three supervisory personnel before he was subdued by UAW committeemen. It should be added that two others were shot dead in separate auto plant incidents within weeks of the Johnson shooting spree, and that in May, 1971 a jury found Johnson innocent because of insanity after visiting and being shocked by what they considered the maddening conditions at Johnson's place of work.[23]

The sixty-seven day strike at General Motors by the United Auto Workers in the Fall of 1970 is a classic example of the anti-employee nature of the conventional strike, perfectly illustrative of the ritualized manipulation of the individual which is repeated so often and which changes absolutely nothing about the nature of work.

A Wall Street Journal article of October 29, 1970 discussed the reasons why union and management agreed on the necessity of a strike. The UAW saw that a walk-out would serve as "an escape valve for the frustrations of workers bitter about what they consider intolerable working conditions," and a long strike would "wear down the expectations of members." The Journal went on to point out that, "among those who do understand the need for strikes to ease intra-union pressures are many company bargainers... They are aware that union leaders may need such strikes to get contracts ratified and get re-elected."[24] Or, as William Serrin succinctly put it: "A strike, by putting the workers on the street, rolls the steam out of them – it reduces their demands and thus brings agreement and ratification; it also solidifies the authority of the union hierarchy."[25]

Thus, the strike was called. The first order of the negotiating business was the dropping of all job condition demands, which were only raised in the first place as a public relations gesture to the membership. With this understood, the discussions and publicity centered around wages and early retirement benefits exclusively, and the charade played itself out to its pre-ordained end. "The company granted each demand [UAS president] Woodcock had made, demands he could have had in September."[26] Hardly surprising, then, the GM loaned the union $23 million per month during the strike.[27] As Serrin conceded, the company and the union are not even adversaries, much less enemies.[28]

In November, 1970, the fuel deliverers of New York City, exasperated by their union president's resistance to pleas for action, gave him a public beating. Also in New York, in the following March the Yellow Cab drivers ravaged a Teamsters' Union meeting hall in Manhattan in response to their union officials' refusal to yield the floor to rank and file speakers.

In January, 1971, the interns at San Francisco General Hospital struck, solely over

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23. William Serrin, *The Company and the Union* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973), pp. 233-236.
24. Cited by Brecher, *op.cit.*, pp. 279-280.
25. Serrin, *op.cit.*, p. 4.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 263-264.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 202.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 306.

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hospital conditions and patient care. Eschewing any ties to organized labor, their negotiating practice was to vote publicly on each point at issue, with all interns present.

The General Motors strike of 1970 discussed above in no way dealt with the content of jobs.[29] Knowing that it would face no challenge from the UAW, especially, it was thought, so soon after a strike and its cathartic effects, GM began in 1971 a co-ordinated effort at speeding up the making of cars, under the name General Motors Assembly Division, or GMAD. The showplace plant for this re-organization was the Vega works at Lordstown, Ohio, where the workforce was 85% white and the average age 27. With cars moving down the line almost twice as fast as in pre-GMAD days, workers resorted to various forms of on the job resistance to the terrific pace. GM accused them of sabotage and had to shut down the line several times. Some estimates set the number of deliberately disabled cars as high as 500,000 for the period of December, 1971 to March, 1972, when a strike was finally called following a 97% affirmative vote of Lordstown's Local 1112. But a three-week strike failed to check the speed of the line, the union, as always, having no more desire than management to see workers effectively challenging the control of production. The membership lost all confidence in the union; Gary Bryner, the 29-year-old president of Local 1112 admitted: "They're angry with the union; when I go through the plant I get catcalls."[30]

In the GMAD plant at Norwood, Ohio, a strike like that at Lordstown broke out in April and lasted until September, 1971. The 174 days constituted the longest walkout in GM history.[31] The Norwood workers had voted 98% in favor of striking in the previous February, but the UAW had forced the two locals to go out separately, first Lordstown, and later Norwood, thus isolating them and protecting the GMAD program. Actually, the anti-worker efforts of the UAW go even further back, to September of 1971, when the Norwood Local 674 was put in receivership, or taken over, by the central leadership when members had tried to confront GMAD over the termination of their seniority rights.

In the summer of 1973, three wildcat strikes involving Chrysler facilities in Detroit took place in less than a month. Concerning the successful one-day wildcat at the Jefferson assembly plant, UAW vice president Doug Fraser said Chrysler had made a critical mistake in "appeasing the workers" and the Mack Avenue walkout was effectively suppressed when a crowd of "UAW local union officers and committeemen, armed with baseball bats and clubs, gathered outside of the plant gates to 'urge' the workers to return."[32]

October, 1973 brought the signing of a new three-year contract between Ford and the UAW. But with the signing, appeared fresh evidence that workers intend to involve themselves in decisions concerning their work lives: "Despite the agreement, about 7,700 workers left their jobs at seven Ford plants when the strike deadline was reached, some because they were unhappy with the secrecy surrounding the new agreement."[33]

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29. Roy B. Helfgott, *Labor Economics* (New York: Random House, 1974), p. 506.
30. Aronowitz, *op.cit.*, p. 43.
31. *Wall Street Journal,* December 9, 1972.
32. Michael Adelman, in *Labor Newsletter* (February, 1974), pp. 7-8.
33. *Los Angeles Times,* October 27, 1973.

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With these brief remarks on a very small number of actions by workers, let us try to arrive at some understanding of the overall temper of American wage-earners since the mid-1960s.

Sidney Lens found that the number of strikes during 1968, 1969, and 1971 was extremely high, and that only the years 1937, 1944-46, and 1952-53 showed comparable totals.[34] More interesting is the growing tendency of strikers to reject the labor contracts negotiated for them. In those contracts in which the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service took a hand (the only ones for which there are statistics), contract rejections rose from 8.7% of the cases in 1964, to 10% in 1965, to 11% in 1966, to an amazing 14.2% in 1967, levelling off since then to about 12% annually.[35] And the ratio of work stoppages occurring during the period when a contract was in effect has changed, which is especially significant when it is remembered that most contracts specifically forbid strikes. Bureau of Labor Statistics figures reveal that while about one-third of all stoppages in 1968 occurred under existing agreements, "an alarming number,"[36] almost two-fifths of them in 1972 took place while contracts were in effect.[37] In 1973 Aronowitz provided a good summary: "The configuration of strikes since 1967 is unprecedented in the history of American workers. The number of strikes as a whole, as well as rank-and-file rejections of proposed union settlements with employers, and wildcat actions has exceeded that in any similar period in the modern era."[38] And as Sennett and Cobb, writing in 1971 made clear, the period has involved "the most turbulent rejection of organized union authority among young workers."[39]

The 1970 GM strike was mentioned as an example of the usefulness of a sham struggle in safely releasing pent-up employee resentment. The nation-wide telephone workers' strike of July, 1971 is another example, and the effects of the rising tide of anti-union hostility can also be seen in it. Rejecting a Bell System offer of a 30% wage increase over three years, the Communication Workers' union called a strike, publicly announcing that the only point at issue was that "we need 31 to 32 per cent,"[40] as union president Joseph Beirne put it. After a six-day walkout, the 1% was granted, as was a new Bell policy requiring all employees to join the union and remain in good standing as a condition of employment. But while the CWA was granted the standard 'union-shop' status, a rather necessary step for the fulfillment of its role as a discipline agent of the work force, thousands of telephone workers refused to return to their jobs, in some cases staying out for weeks in defiance of CWA orders.

The calling of the 90-day wage-price freeze on August 15 was in large part a response to the climate of worker unruliness and independence, typified by the defiant phone workers. Aside from related economic considerations, the freeze and the ensuing controls were adopted because the unions needed government help in

34. Sidney Lens, *The Labor Wars* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor, 1974), p. 376.

35. Richard Armstrong, "Labor 1970: Angry, Aggressive, Acquisitive," *Fortune* (October, 1969), p. 144. William and Margaret Westley, *The Emerging Worker* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1971), p. 100.

36. Harold W. Davey, *Contemporary Collective Bargaining* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1972), p. 153.

37. Norman J. Samuels, Assistant Commissioner, Wages and Industrial Relations, letter to author, April 19, 1974.

38. Aronowitz, *op.cit.*, p. 214.

39. Richard Sennett and Jonathon Cobb, *The Hidden Injuries of Class* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), p. 4.

40. Remark by CWA president, Joseph Beirne, *New York Times*, July 18, 1971.

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restraining the workers. Sham strikes clearly lose their effectiveness if employees refuse to play their assigned roles remaining, for example, on strike on their own.

George Meany, head of the AFL-CIO, had been calling for a wage-price freeze since 1969,[41] and in the weeks prior to August 15 had held a number of very private meetings with President Nixon.[42] Though he was compelled to publicly decry the freeze as "completely unfair to the worker" and "a bonanza to big business," he did not even call for an excess profits tax; he did come out strongly for a permanent wage-price control board and labor's place on it, however.

It seems clear that business leaders understood the need for government assistance. In September, a *Fortune* article proclaimed that "A system of wage-price review boards is the best hope for breaking the cost-push momentum that individual unions and employers have been powerless to resist."[43] As workers try to make partial compensation for their lack of autonomy on the job by demanding better wages and benefits, the only approved concessions, they create obvious economic pressure especially in an inflationary period. Arthur M. Louis, in November's *Fortune*, realized that the heat had been on labor officials for some time. Speaking of the "rebellious rank and file" of longshoremen, miners, and steelworkers, he said, "Long before President Nixon announced his wage-price freeze, many labor leaders were calling for stabilization, if only to get themselves off the hook."[44]

A *Fortune* editorial of January (1972) predicted that by the Fall, a national "wave of wildcat strikes" might well occur and the labor members of the tripartite control board would resign.[45] In fact, Meany and Woodcock quit the Pay Board much earlier in the year than that, due precisely to the rank and file's refusal to support the plainly anti-labor wage policies of the board. Though Fitzsimmons of the Teamsters stayed on, and the controls continued, through a total of four "Phases" until early 1974, the credibility of the controls program was crippled, and its influence waned rapidly. Though the program was brought to a premature end, the Bureau of Labor Statistics gave its ceiling on wage increases much of the credit for the fact that the number of strikes in 1972 was the smallest in five years.[46]

During "Phase One" of the controls, the 90-day freeze, David Deitch wrote that "the new capitalism requires a strong, centralized trade union movement with which to bargain." He made explicit exactly what kind of "strength" would be needed: "The labor bureaucracy must ultimately silence the rank and file if it wants to join in the tripartite planning, in the same sense that the wildcat strike cannot be tolerated."[47]

In this area, too, members of the business community have shown an understanding of the critical role of the unions. In May, 1970, within hours of the plane crash that claimed UAW chief Walter Reuther, there was publicly expressed corporate desire for a replacement who could continue to effectively contain the workers. "It's taken a

41. Aronowitz, *op.cit.*, p. 224.
42. See Jack Anderson's "Merry-Go-Round" column, August 23, 1971, for example.
43. Robert V. Roosa, "A Strategy for Winding Down Inflation," *Fortune* (September, 1971), p. 70.
44. Arthur M. Louis, "Labor Can Make or Break the Stabilization Program," *Fortune* (November, 1971), p. 142.
45. Editorial: "Phasing Out Phase Two," *Fortune* (January, 1972), p. 63.
46. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Work Stoppages in 1972: Summary Report* (Washington: Department of Labor, 1974), p. 1.
47. David Deitch, "Watershed of the American Economy," *The Nation* (September 13, 1971), p. 201.

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strong man to keep the situation under control," Virgil Boyd, Chrysler vice chairman, told the *New York Times*. "I hope that whoever his successor is can exert great internal discipline."[48] Likewise, *Fortune* bewailed the absence of a strong union in the coalfields, in a 1971 article subtitled, "The nation's fuel supply, as well as the industry's prosperity, depends on a union that has lost control of its members."[49]

Despite the overall failure of the wage control program, the government has been helping the unions in several other ways. Since 1970, for example, it has worked to reinforce the conventional strike—again, due to its important safety-valve function. In June, 1970, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that an employer could obtain an injunction to force employees back to work when a labor agreement contains a no-strike pledge and an arbitration clause. "The 1970 decision astonished many observers of the labor relations scene,"[50] directly reversing a 1962 decision of the Court, which ruled that such walkouts were merely labor disputes and not illegal. Also in 1970, during the four-month General Electric strike, Schenectady, New York, officials "pleaded with non-union workers to refrain from crossing picket lines on the grounds that such action might endanger the peace."[51] A photo of the strike scene in *Fortune* was captioned, "Keeping workers out—workers who were trying to cross picket lines and get to their jobs—became the curious task of Schenectady policemen."[52]

A Supreme Court decision in 1972 indicated how far state power will go to protect the spectacle of union strikes. Four California Teamsters were ordered reinstated with five years' back pay as "a unanimous Supreme Court ruled [November 7, 1972] that it is unfair labor practice for an employer to fire a worker solely for taking part in a strike."[53] Government provides positive as well as negative support to approved walkouts, too. An 18-month study by the Wharton School of Finance and Commerce found that welfare benefits, unemployment compensation, and food stamps to strikers mean that "the American taxpayer has assumed a significant share of the cost of prolonged work stoppages."[54]

But in some areas, unions would rather not even risk official strikes. The United Steelworkers of America—which allows only union officials to vote on contract ratifications, by the way—agreed with the major steel companies in March, 1973, that only negotiations and arbitration would be used to resolve differences. The Steelworkers' contract approved in April, 1974, declared that the no-strike policy would be in effect until at least 1980.[55] A few days before, in March, a federal court threw out a suit filed by rank and file steelworkers, ruling in sum that the union needn't be democratic in reaching its agreements with management.[56]

David Deitch, quoted above, said that the stability of the system required a centralized union structure. The process of centralization has been a fact and its acceler-

48. Quoted by Serrin, *op.cit.*, p. 24.
49. Thomas O'Hanlon, "Anarchy Threatens the Kingdom of Coal," *Fortune* (January, 1971), p. 78.
50. Arthur A. Sloane and Fred Witney, *Labor Relations* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1972), p. 390.
51. From an anti-union article by John Davenport, "How to Curb Union Power" (labeled *Opinion*), *Fortune* (July, 1971), p. 52.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
53. *Los Angeles Times*, November 8, 1972.
54. Armand J. Thieblot and Ronald M. Cowin, *Welfare and Strikes—The Use of Public Funds to Support Strikers* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1973), p. 185.
55. *New York Times*, April 13, 1974.
56. *Weekly People*, April 27, 1974.

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ation has followed the increasing militancy of wage-earners since the middle-1960s. A June, 1971, article in the federal *Monthly Labor Review* discussed the big increase in union mergers over the preceding three years.[57] August, 1972, saw two such mergers, the union of the United Papermakers and Paperworkers and the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite, and Paper Mill Workers, and that of the United Brewery Workers with the Teamsters.[58] In a speech made on July 5, 1973, Longshoremen's president Harry Bridges called for the formation of "one big, national labor movement or federation."[59]

The significance of this centralization movement is that it places the individual even further from a position of possible influence over the union hierarchy—at a time when he is more and more likely to be obliged to join a union as a condition of employment. The situation is beginning to resemble in some ways the practice in National Socialist Germany, of requiring the membership of all workers in 'one big, national labor movement or federation,' the Labor Front. In the San Francisco Bay area, for example, in 1969, "A rare—and probably unique—agreement that will require all the employees of a public agency to join a union or pay it the equivalent of union dues was reported in Oakland by the East Bay Regional Park District."[60] And in the same area this process was upheld in 1973: "A city can require its employees to pay the equivalent of initiation fees and dues to a union to keep their jobs, arbitrator Robert E. Burns has ruled in a precedent-setting case involving the city of Hayward."[61] This direction is certainly not limited to public employees, according to the Department of Labor. Their "What Happens When Everyone Organizes" article implied the inevitability of total unionization.

Though a discussion of the absence of democracy in unions is outside the scope of this essay, it is important to emphasize the lack of control possessed by the rank and file. In 1961 Joel Seidman commented on the subjection of the typical union membership: "It is hard to read union constitutions without being struck by the many provisions dealing with the obligations and the disciplining of members, as against the relatively small number of sections concerned with members' rights within the organization."[62] Two excellent offerings on the subject written in the 1970s are *Autocracy and Insurgency in Organized Labor* by Burton Hall[63] and "Apathy and Other Axioms: Expelling the Union Dissenter from History," by H.W. Benson.[64]

Relatively unthreatened by memberships, the unions have entered into ever-closer relations with government and business. A Times-Post Service story of April, 1969, disclosed a three-day meeting between AFL-CIO leadership and top Nixon adminis-

57. Lucretia M. Dewey, "Union Merger Pace Quickens," *Monthly Labor Review* (June, 1971), pp. 63-70.

58. *New York Times,* August 3 and 6, 1972.

59. Confirmed by Harry Bridges, letter to author, April 11, 1974.

60. Dick Meister, "Public Workers Union Win a Rare Agreement," *San Francisco Chronicle* (April 13, 1969).

61. *San Francisco Chronicle*, "Union Fee Ruling on City Workers," October 31, 1973.

62. Joel Seidman, "Political Controls and Member Rights: An Analysis of Union Constitutions," *Essays on Industrial Relations Research Problems and Prospects* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961).

63. Burton Hall, ed., *Autocracy and Insurgency in Organized Labor* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1972).

64. H.W. Benson, "Apathy and Other Axioms: Expelling the Union Dissenter From History," Irving Howe, ed., *The World of the Blue Collar Worker* (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1972), pp. 209-226.

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tration officials, shrouded in secrecy at the exclusive Greenbriar spa. "Big labor and big government have quietly arranged an intriguing tryst this week in the mountains of West Virginia...for a private meeting involving at least half a dozen cabinet members."[65] Similarly, a surprising *New York Times* article appearing on the last day of 1972 is worth quoting for the institutionalizing of government-labor ties it augurs: "President Nixon has offered to put a labor union representative at a high level in every federal government department, a well-informed White House official has disclosed. The offer, said to be unparalleled in labor history, was made to union members on the National Productivity Commission, including George Meany, president of the AFL-CIO and Frank E. Fitzsimmons, president of the IBT, at a White House meeting last week...labor sources said that they understood the proposal to include an offer to place union men at the assistant secretary level in all relevant government agencies...should the President's offer be taken up, it would mark a signal turning point in the traditional relations between labor and government."[66]

In Oregon, the activities of the Associated Oregon Industries, representing big business and the Oregon AFL-CIO, by the early '70s reflected a close working relationship between labor and management on practically everything. Joint lobbying efforts, against consumer and environmentalist proposals especially, and other forms of cooperation led to an exchange of even speakers at each other's conventions in the Fall of 1971. On September 2, the president of the AOI, Phil Bladine, addressed the AFL-CIO; on September 18, AFL-CIO president Ed Whalen spoke before the AOI.[67] In California, as in many other states, the pattern has been very much the same, with labor and business working together to attack conservationists in 1972 and defeat efforts to reform campaign spending in 1974, for example.[68]

Also revealing is the "Strange Bedfellows From Labor, Business' Own Dominican Resort" article on the front page of the May 15, 1973 *Wall Street Journal* by Jonathon Kwitney. Among the leading stockholders in the 15,000 acre Punta Cana, Dominican Republic resort and plantation are George Meany and Lane Kirkland, president and secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO, and Keith Terpe, Seafarers' Union official, as well as leading officers of Seatrain Lines, Inc., which employs members of Terpe's union.

Not seen for what they are, the striking cases of mounting business-labor-government collusion and cooperation have largely been overlooked. But those in a position to see that the worker is more and more actively intolerant of a daily work life beyond his control, also realize that even closer cooperation is necessary. In early 1971 *Personnel*, the magazine of the American Management Association, said that "it is perhaps time for a marriage of convenience between the two [unions and management],"[69] for the preservation of order. Pointing out, however, that many members "tend to mistrust the union."[70]

The reason for this "mistrust," as we have seen, is the historical refusal of unions to

65. *Times-Post Service,* "Administration's Tryst with Labor," *San Francisco Chronicle* (April 14, 1969).
66. *New York Times,* "Key Jobs Offered to Labor by Nixon" (December 31, 1972), p. 1.
67. Phil Stanford, "Convention Time," *Oregon Times* (September, 1971), p. 4.
68. See *California AFL-CIO News,* editorial: "The Convention Caper" (January 14, 1972), for example.
69. Robert J. Marcus, "The Changing Workforce," *Personnel* (January-February, 1971), p. 12.
70. *Ibid.,* p. 10.

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interfere with management's control of work. The AFL-CIO magazine, *The American Federationist*, admitted labor's lack of interest and involvement in an article in the January, 1974 issue entitled "Work is Here to Stay, Alas." And the traditional union position on the matter is why, in turn, C. Jackson Grayson, Dean of the School of Business Administration at Southern Methodist University and former chairman of the Price Commission, called in early 1974 for union-management collaboration. The January 12 issue of *Business Week* contains his call for a symbolic dedication on July 4, 1976, "with the actual signing of a document—a Declaration of Interdependence" between labor and business, "inseparably linked in the productivity quest."

Productivity—output per hour of work—has of course fallen due to worker dissatisfaction and unrest. A basic indication of the continuing revolt against work are the joint campaigns for higher productivity, such as the widely publicized US Steel-United Steelworkers efforts. A special issue on productivity in *Business Week* for September 9, 1972, highlighted the problem, pointing out also the opposition workers had for union-backed drives of this kind.[71] Closely related to low productivity, it seems, is the employee resistance to working overtime, even during economic recession. The refusal of thousands of Ford workers to overtime prompted a Ford executive in April, 1974 to say, "We're mystified by the experience in light of the general economic situation."[72] Also during April, the Labor Department reported that "the productivity of American workers took its biggest drop on record as output slumped in all sectors of the economy during the first quarter."[73]

In 1935 the NRA issued the Henderson Report, which counseled that "unless something is done soon, they [the workers] intend to take things into their own hands."[74] Something was done, the hierarchical, national unions of the CIO finally appeared and stabilized relations. In the 1970s it may be that a limited form of worker participation in management decisions will be required to prevent employees from "taking things into their own hands." Irving Bluestone, head of the UAW's GM department, predicted in early 1972 that some form of participation would be necessary, under union-management control, of course.[75] As Arnold Tannenbaum of the Institute for Social Research in Michigan pointed out in the late 1960s, ceding some power to workers can be an excellent means of increasing their subjection, if it succeeds in giving them a sense of involvement.[76]

But it remains doubtful that token participation will assuage the worker's alienation. More likely, it will underline it and make even clearer the true nature of the union-management relationship, which will still obtain. It may be more probable that traditional union institutions, such as the paid, professional stratum of officials and representatives, monopoly of membership guaranteed by management, and the labor contract itself will be increasingly re-examined[77] as workers continue to strive to take their work lives into their own hands.

71. *Business Week,* "The Unions Begin to Bend on Work Rules" (September 9, 1972), pp. 106, 108.
72. *New York Times,* April 27, 1974.
73. *New York Times,* April 26, 1974.
74. Quoted from Serrin, *op.cit.*, p. 118.
75. David Jenkins, *Job Power* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1973), pp. 319-320.
76. *Ibid.*, p. 312.
77. The San Francisco Social Services Union, a rather anti-union union of about 200 public welfare workers, has emphatically rejected these institutions since 1968. This, plus its vocal militancy and frequent exposure of "organized labor's" corruption and collusion, has earned them the hatred of the established unions in San Francisco.

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REVIEWS:

Mihailo Marković, *From Affluence to Praxis: Philosophy and Social Criticism*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1974. 265 pp. $3.95.

Svetozar Stojanović, *Between Ideals and Reality: A Critique of Socialism and Its Future*. Translated by Gerson S. Sher. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973. 222 pp. $2.95.

The Yugoslav social philosophers with whom Mihailo Marković and Svetozar Stojanović are most closely associated offer a "middle way" toward Marxist theory in which praxis, particularly through critical application of dialectical reasoning, has overcome the certainty of cant. In eschewing both Stalinism and Maoism for humanism, this approach has conformed, over the past two decades, to the apparent evolution of Yugoslav political practice. Indeed, for a brief time (1965-68), these Yugoslav philosophers seemed to enjoy the best of several possible situations: not only were they in general agreement with their government, but they were also sought—as guides to praxis—in other countries, including the United States. Their acknowledged relevance at home as well as abroad seemed even to imply that this way of thinking was historically correct. After 1968, however, Yugoslav President Tito and his colleagues ended their tentative welcome for critical social thought from outside their own ranks. Faced with rising prices, a querulous working class (excluding managers and civil servants), social demands which were easily translated into national-ethnic divisiveness, an increasingly well-informed public opinion and a national student body increasingly willing to appeal to it, the League of Communist leaders, especially after 1970, responded to the chaos that they perceived by restricting the initiatives to themselves. They saw no need to allow platforms for either critical philosophers or various claimants to the leadership of separatist ethnic groups. While drawing up laws (1973-74) to bring new people into politics and "strengthen" self-management—actions superficially in line with the critical social philosophers—the Party leaders have really attempted to elevate politics and politicians to the authoritative pedestal from which they once addressed society. It is ironic that this behavior, indicative of the type of structural contradiction under socialism well elaborated by Marković and Stojanović, partially victimized them.[1]

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1. Since the appearance of my note, "The Case of the Belgrade Eight'," in *Telos* 19 (Spring, 1974), pp. 138-141, Yugoslav sources have indicated that, in consideration of the show of support of both the Belgrade Philosophy Faculty and foreign intellectuals for the eight professors, including Marković and Stojanović, the political leadership has largely abandoned efforts to remove the academics from their jobs and restrict their travel. From October 1972 until August 1974, the government had tried to penalize the professors by legal and administrative means. These included the confiscation of their passports; the passage, in the republic of Serbia, of a university law which (1) stipulated political criteria for the appointment and reappointment of teachers and (2) enlarged "outside" representation on the faculty council, which approves all nominations to teaching posts, to include 10 people nominated by the republican government and 10 by various scholarly associations (thus the "outside" representatives comprise 50% of the faculty council's membership); and the exertion of pressure upon the League of Communists branch at the Philosophy Faculty. Just as the eight professors refused to resign, so their colleagues at the Faculty refused to suspend or to fire them, and students in Belgrade, Zagreb, and Ljubljana threatened to go on strike if the professors were dismissed. The Rector of Zagreb University said that he would resign in protest if the eight were fired, and the Rector of Belgrade University also indicated his support. In February 1974 the

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Although their particular interests differ, Stojanović, Marković, and their colleagues share the same intellectual, historical, and moral base. Thus their individual work forms a unified whole which, following in the Frankfurt tradition that they admire, might even be termed a Belgrade School.[2] Intellectually, the Yugoslav social philosophers espouse the dialectic; historically, their work originates in the attempt to combat, supersede, and exorcise Stalinism; morally, they stand for humanism, or the affirmation and actualization of the "best" in human nature. These three components of their thought—dialectic, anti-Stalinism, humanism—appear so organically joined in Yugoslavia that it is difficult to conceive of their universal application. Nevertheless, the Belgrade School posits the generalizability of their thought on their perception of alienation, in the form of class society, as the symptomatic, universal condition of our time.

For these Yugoslavs, dialectic is not only a means to critical social philosophy and socialist praxis, but it is also a means to sanity amid contemporary irrationalities. Dialectic is the unquestioning questioning of what is and what could be; it is the opposite of cant. As Marković says (p. 22), "Dialectic is. . .not only a general theory and method of acquiring positive knowledge, but also a theory and method of revolutionary negation and supersession of the existing reality." He goes on, in an implicit rebuttal of Soviet thought, "When the latter is forgotten, dialectic is in danger of becoming a tool of rational justification of the given historical form of existence, that is, an instrument of ideology." Yet dialectical negation is not synonymous with nihilism, for the recognition of internal contradictions presupposes that, in every ongoing process, there are both positive and negative elements. Such evenhandedness enables the Yugoslavs to approach, and try to appropriate, those features of advanced, industrial, capitalist societies which they regard as conducive to the "best" values of the past two centuries. They would take, for example, Western organization without its hierarchy and Western technology without its profit motive. Furthermore, the dialectic is as operant in methodology as in life, reconciling the principle of uniformity with the principle of diversity, *erklären* with *verstehen*. "There is no better name to designate such a complex method which synthesizes the essential features of behaviorism and phenomenology, of struc-

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Belgrade University Assembly passed a resolution condemning the eight and asking their Faculty to dismiss them. The members of the Philosophy Faculty would not do this, but they did agree to set up investigatory committees of well-known professors from all over the country. In March, eight five-member committees were formed. At a faculty meeting in July, the committees presented their reports, which were highly favorable to the "Belgrade Eight." One hundred fifty members of the faculty voted to support the eight professors, while one person abstained. The Faculty Council subsequently upheld this vote. Students engaged in this struggle, however, have been persecuted and are now in jails. As a result of reactions to this repression, top government officials have become dissatisfied with the settlement, and are now pressuring individual members of the Faculty council (that has the power to dismiss the Belgrade Eight), causing the present favorably-disposed members to resign in an effort to replace them with new members more inclined to dismiss the eight from their positions. Hence, things are back to normal!

2. The similarity is not accidental, for much of their work, particularly the Marković book, is a rephrasing (useful for American college students) of the original critical theorists. See, for example, Max Horkheimer's more pessimistic analysis in "The Authoritarian State," *Telos* (spring 1973): 3-20. Although the group at Belgrade University collaborates with the philosophers from Zagreb who publish the journal *Praxis*, differences exist between their respective intellectual traditions, economic preferences, and political orientations. Until this year the Belgrade philosophers' work has been mostly untranslated into English.

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turalism and historicism than 'dialectic'" (Marković, p. 21). Ultimately, despite the dialectic's foundation in critical activity, especially Marxist, the Yugoslavs' extended use of it seems too conciliatory. At the very least, they have reconciled young and old Marx, humanism and technological advance, politics and ethics.

As the latter dichotomies indicate, the Yugoslavs attempt to make their humanism an ethic for the modern world, and their tone is frequently moralistic.[3] This approach is rooted in their—and all Yugoslavs'—disillusionment with the practice of socialism in the Soviet Union. Certainly, they condemn the degeneration of the October Revolution into Stalinism, the phenomenon which epitomizes egotism on both individual and collective levels, and, in contrast to that, they affirm the ideal norms, i.e., the goals, of Yugoslav self-management. Stojanović goes so far as to condemn the major ideas, as well as the post-Lenin practice, of the Bolshevik movement. For Stojanović, Lenin's revolutionary party—its organization, its clandestine style in the relationships between the party and society as well as between the party's leaders and the ordinary members, its insistence on asceticism as a means to equality—was so much hubris. Worse than that, the prerevolutionary practice lived on, through the success of the Bolsheviks and the institutionalizations of Stalin, to alienate the society from the revolutionary party and the revolutionary party from its members. Although it was the Stalinists who made a fetish of organization,[4] they merely underlined the paradox to which the original Bolsheviks had succumbed: the paradox of fighting for "humanistic goals" with "a totally centralized, hierarchical, and largely undemocratic" organization (p. 192).[5] In such a situation, with an unyielding party firmly in command, the ideology of collectivism was only a mystification.

Nevertheless, not all countries have had Yugoslavia's good fortune, in retrospect, to have been destroyed, successively, by a semi-industrial capitalist economy and military occupation. While the Yugoslavs could unite in the collective effort of a true revolutionary situation (guided, however, by individuals, such as Tito, who rose to greatness and by a popular communist organization), other countries might have to endure a long political struggle. Particularly in economically developed countries, Stojanović says, the revolutionary party should evolve from the Bolshevik model to a phase in which it can appropriate the "best" of historical socialist practice. Extrapolating from the Yugoslav experience, Stojanović advocates a model combining "Marxist personalism, humanistic hedonism, and stimulatory material compensation for labor" (p. 205). Although all of these are "irrelevant for the first phase of revolution in underdeveloped countries," they comprise a "mature communism" to which the "primitive communism" of both the Soviet Union and China should aspire. Their "undeveloped, immature communism," in a word, consists of "collectivistic and ascetic egalitarianism" (p. 201), relating, in a Weberian way, a

3. See, for example, Stojanović's progression from ethical theorist to political philosopher (in his introductory note). Although the Stojanović and Marković books under review can be read as virtually two parts of the same book, Stojanović is more explicitly concerned with and more successful at discussing a Marxist ethic, while Marković is better on critical social theory.

4. Stojanović, in the original Yugoslav (1969) edition and in the present translation, castigates the Chinese for this, too, although he indicates in a preface to the English edition that he has since modified his views on China.

5. Thus the Yugoslav philosophers find fault with both Stalinism and Leninism, while the Yugoslav political leadership has remained favorable to Leninism.

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"primitive communist ethic and primitive-politocratic statism" (p. 204).[6]

So Stojanović leads us back to the relationship between ethics and politics, a relationship that the Yugoslav thinkers see as mediated by egalitarianism. Unfortunately, their relationship to egalitarianism is itself mediated by both ethics and politics. The philosophers reflect the ambivalence of the Yugoslav leaders in coming to terms with economic equality. They support a market system with qualifications: that it be temporary, that it not foster selfish competition, that it not enrich some workers at the expense of others, that it not create a society of individual consumers and collective capitalists. Thus, market socialism must be controlled through planning and coordinating mechanisms, preferably democratic, such as self-management organs on various levels. With these caveats, one might ask why a market is necessary. The Yugoslavs feel that some form of market is unavoidable at this historical juncture of economic underdevelopment and social exploitation. As a tool of rationality and a goad to productivity, market socialism symbolizes the attempted reconciliation, again, of humanism and technological advance. "In a word," Stojanović says, "the market can unmask parasitism and introduce effective selection and stimulation... Self-government is threatened not only by statism, but also by a utopian picture of human nature, on the basis of which people naïvely expect that self-managing groups will produce rationally at any given moment, without any competition whatsoever" (p. 132). Despite their trenchant criticism of Yugoslav excesses and errors in the direction of "economism,"[7] the philosophers are unwilling to advocate the kinds of controls on both production and consumption that seem so necessary in the rich capitalist countries, because such controls—which would be, essentially, politically imposed—strike the nerve made raw by Yugoslav's history of statism. Indeed, the philosophers, historically conditioned by Yugoslavia's postwar evolution, see the evil of statism in many forms: in the "sleepy giant" of the bureaucracy, in centralization, in the development of an unhumanistic "economism." In their analysis, statism is threatening not primarily in terms of inequality (although they do connect it to the entrenchment of a new ruling class) but in terms of Marx's concept of alienated labor (Marković) or Marx's implicit social ethic (Stojanović). For the Yugoslavs, the key to resolving these problems lies in self-management as the synthesis (another reconciliation) of rationality and humanism, so that practice—rather than rules or restrictions—should legislate economic morality.[8]

Taken together, practice and morality comprise what the Belgrade School and some other Yugoslav philosophers apparently consider their major contribution to critical social theory: an emphasis on praxis, a concept which they work in tandem

6. Stojanović's critique of China, written during the Cultural Revolution, is similar to official American views of the time: he does not approve (p. 205) of "their nihilistic attitude toward world cultural history, their antipersonalism and anti-intellectualism, collectivism of the manipulated crowd, national messianism, universal uniformity, and their total fetishization, even deification, of the leader." But Stojanović has since changed his mind, and Marković (pp. 113-15) places Maoism in the context of Chinese economic underdevelopment and culture.

7. See especially Marković, chapter 4 and Stojanović, chapter 6.

8. However, this practice is modulated by the political intentions behind the adoption of self-management, as we can see from Yugoslav experience and also from the attraction of corporation executives in capitalist countries to forms of workers' "participation." See my *Beyond Marx and Tito: Theory and Practice in Yugoslav Socialism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975), chapters 1 and 2.

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with dialectic. Insofar as their concept of praxis derives from Marx,[9] the interdependence of practice and morality is axiomatic; however, when we seek to apply this model to the concrete historical situation, we might find their reasoning circular and overoptimistic. Thus, Marković gives the impression that (a) praxis is based on a prior morality, and (b) morality is based on socialization through praxis. Where are we to begin? It is scarcely comforting to think that praxis, though an "ideal limit," has "existed in history as a mode of behavior of the most developed individuals" (who were they? where were they? *"most developed"*?) and that "all people, at least in some better moments of their life act in that way" (Marković, p. 67). In these days of institutionalized ersatz, Marković should give some firmer grounding to the connection between morality and practice besides endorsing those values which, according to him, have been preferred by both "the vast majority of people" and "the best minds in the past" (p. 77). Stojanović, in an essay on "The Ethical Potential of Marx's Thought," is more careful and thus more satisfying when he concludes (p. 155), "Marx was a sort of ethical perfectionist: he stood for the realization of every human potential which does not threaten man's social nature." Oddly, it is disconcerting when Marković calls for "a new morality. . . —a morality of human dignity, solidarity, stoic persistence, and spiritual superiority which can struggle with a strong material force" (p. 207) because this sounds inspirational or evangelical rather than critical. Moreover, when Marković pegs the universal practice of praxis to a universally high level of economic development (the Yugoslav goal in the Advanced Industrial Revolution), cybernetics, and the increasing employment of "experts" (pp. 227 ff and passim), he is expressing an optimism which can only appear anachronistic.

Yet the audience to which the Yugoslav philosophers address their appeal for praxis is precisely the sort of broadly-defined middle class which has been formed in the highly industrialized nations. It is the "new working class," their intellectuals, and their sympathetic managers who will advance, as Marković's title implies, "from affluence to praxis." Because this class has historically been appalled by overt doctrines and attracted to positivistic pragmatism, lured every so often by an appeal to moral idealism, the concepts of dialectic and praxis offer flexibility in place of dogmatism, critical reasoning rather than self-congratulatory optimism, self-actualization in lieu of self-abnegation. Moreover, with dialectic and praxis the Yugoslavs have struck a blow against the romanticism which absolutizes the revolutionary potential of the proletariat, as opposed to the middle classes, and its actualization through an exclusionary political party, rather than through a set of social actions and interactions which would permeate all institutions. These elements of the practice of praxis—a flexible dialectic, the humanization of relations, social morality—might even constitute a new middle-class ideology. But although Marković places great hope in this new morality, in critical social theory, and in the active demystification of existing relationships and institutions, we may well ask how the majority of people (including intellectuals) can break their actual dependence on bureaucracy. Concretely, how can they bite the hand that feeds them?

To their credit, the Yugoslavs realize that all phenomena combine positive and negative features; moreover, they warn that no social action guarantees the intended

9. "*Praxis* is *ideal* human activity, one in which man realizes the *optimal* potentialities of his being, and which is therefore an *end in itself*" (Marković, p. 64).

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result. Nonetheless, their explanations of two phenomena still leave me unsatisfied: the occasional prevalence of what is "good" in human activity and the persistence of what I would call "partial consciousness," as in ethnic nationalism. Marx's cultural anthropology, on which much of the Yugoslavs' humanism is based, seems observably and historically correct in its depiction of the activist and ego-oriented facets of human behavior, but its acceptance of the "good" ultimately comes down to an act of faith. For this reason much of the Yugoslavs' work remains ethical rather than theoretical. Perhaps it would help to make an analytic distinction between the desire for self-reliance (which I believe humans do consistently exhibit) and other, less evident but equally preferable behavior such as mutual respect or democratic choice. It is not enough to posit that people need to be "good" and that social forms (notably the institutions established by a ruling class) prevent them from acting out the "good" in their natures. Even under relatively congenial social forms, people often choose to be "evil" to each other, through profit- and power-seeking as well as through myriad acts of unkindness and exclusion. The crux of the problem appears to be the relationship between self and others (the concept of solidarity), on which the Yugoslav and other contemporary philosophers are too general. In this area, the desirable reconciliation would pursue the explorations of the Frankfurt School, especially of Marcuse and Habermas, toward a synthesis of materialism and psychology. Stojanović refers occasionally to psychological motivations, but he does not go far enough. He asks the right questions, for example, on the balance between individuality and sociability, between order and freedom, but he has not yet offered us some answers.

Because of their grappling with the complex and the concrete in their own society, the Yugoslavs might have been expected to arrive at an analysis of the concept of solidarity. Instead, they note, dialectically, the existence of opposites, e.g., the principles of uniformity and diversity, the internal contradictions in human desires and behavior, which have often been molded by an opportunistic ruling class. They also say that social adversity, i.e., oppression, contributes to the formation of a separate (group, ethnic, racial) consciousness, which sometimes takes on regrettably destructive forms. Although history is rife with pertinent examples, this does not constitute an explanation. Humans continually seek to relate themselves to some larger unity, yet their empathy stops short of the social whole. Is there, then, a human need to differentiate themselves on various levels which should enter the cultural anthropologists' speculations? How is this tendency socially influenced? At least for students of revolution, there must be some way of determining how and why partial consciousness is formed as well as how and why it can, in extraordinary situations, be transcended.

In the light of contending currents of socialist thought—including a Yugoslav government torn between market incentives and political controls, East European colleagues who have become the running-dogs of American-style positivism, and the more homespun Yugoslav philosophers who do not incur official displeasure—the Belgrade School stands out for its commitment to extending the bounds of Marxist thought through both the practice of praxis and an intellectual cosmopolitanism. In that sense they have combined dialectically the best of several traditions. Nevertheless, their emphasis on a humanist dialectic seems a polyanna *vis-à-vis* the most pressing problems, which I would define in terms of order, control, and redistribution rather than self-actualization. Indeed, a set of ideas elaborating a non-

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punitive and socially-binding self-abnegation is needed to counter the various prevailing ideologies of indulgence (corporative, collective-capitalistic, and individual-egotistic). In short, both theoretically and practically, we must find something to replace the profit motive.

The Belgrade School of Yugoslav philosophers speak to the real dangers of false collectivism, bureaucratism, hierarchicalization, and monopolization of control. But perhaps their greatest significance is ethical rather than theoretical. The dialectic that they propose is a means of living without illusions in the status quo while maintaining both an ethical code of behavior and a respect for other people as potentially capable of adhering to the same code. This is the revolution in which they believe, a long process of humanization in which the first act is moral and the final act may be political.

Sharon Zukin

Juliet Mitchel, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: Freud, Reich, Laing and Women*. New York: Pantheon, 1974. 465 pp. $8.95.

This is a courageous book, one that is likely to have a deep impact on the theoretical development of the women's movement. In the book, Freud, who has been the movement's *bête noir*, is first cleansed of all traces of anti-feminism and then elevated as the movement's principal theorist. Brashly defying so many axioms of feminism, Mitchell is likely to arouse a storm of controversy.

Having learned of Mitchell's thesis in this book, I opened its pages with eager sympathy. I too think the feminist criticisms of Freud are misplaced and unfounded. And I also regard Freud as a thinker whose positions clarify the social world for radicals, especially for feminists. Yet by the time I closed the book, disappointment had replaced sympathy. For Mitchell failed to establish the critical thrust of Freud's theory and therefore she has not been able to refute the anti-Freudianism of her feminist sisters. Her reading of Freud, deeply influenced by Lévi-Strauss and Lacan, does not clarify the object of Freud's theory and place it properly within the context of a broader critical social theory.

In outline, the argument of *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* goes like this. Mitchell presents an extended review of Freud's concepts of the unconscious and sexuality, followed by probing studies of Reich and Laing. She wants to show that Reich and Laing, favorites of feminist theory, are in reality regressions from Freud's achievements. Rather than the standard view in which they are seen as building upon and correcting Freud, Mitchell argues that they dissolve the unconscious into the conscious and water down the concept of sexuality. Mitchell carries out all of this with an unrelenting, tendentious defense of Freud who somehow provides her with an orthodox purity that no other psychological theorist (except Lacan) has been able to maintain. This defense of Freud prevents her from reading him critically. As much as one may appreciate Freud's analytic powers, his concepts remain distorted systematically by ideological tendencies and currents. If Mitchell's open embrace of

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Freud were merely a rhetorical strategy designed to reverse his image among feminists, there would be no need to protest loudly. But Mitchell's Freudianism goes deeper. It prevents her from establishing a critical psychological theory and it forces her own position into ideological distortions.

The absence of criticism in Mitchell's reading is evident on every page. She tells us, for example, that it is well-known that Freud established a new science with his concepts of the unconscious and sexuality. One can find this judgment in Freud himself as well as in the most banal commentaries. But surely, no critical theory can accept this as a given, much less as a foundation of interpretation. It is necessary first to think through the very notion of the psychological before one can plunge into specific formulations. Freud himself never clarified his project in this way, shunning "philosophy" in favor of "science." As a result, all the commonplaces of bourgeois liberalism consistently distort his discourse: utilitarian images of egoistic self-interest, liberal dualisms of individual versus society, petty-bourgeois prejudices of "finite" emotional energy that must be carefully spent or invested on judiciously selected objects, and so forth. For all his courage in probing the unconscious and castigating prudish anti-sexism, Freud's insights were riddled with ideology because he failed to theorize his advances critically.

In place of a critique, Mitchell dubs Freud's theory a "science." Without defining the nature of science, she proceeds to relegate Reich and Laing to mere describers of social reality, however accurate their descriptions. Worse still, she repeats Freud's most ideological errors. She tells us that Freud discovered the "universal laws" through which man the beast becomes man the human. "Freud gave the name of the Oedipus complex to the universal law by which men and women learn their place in the world..." (p. 409) "The little boy cannot *be* the father, but he can be summoned for his future role in-the-name-of-the-father. The symbolic father...is the law that institutes and constitutes human society, culture in the fullest sense of the term, the law of order which is to be confounded with language and which structures all human societies, which makes them, in fact, human." (p. 391) (Mitchell's emphasis) "Freud's stress on the role of sexuality has to do with the special conditions of human society: how the animal man becomes the human being." (p. 326) These passages are not mere slips, but characterize the main theoretical coordinates of Mitchell's book. Because of this metaphysical trick of nature vs. culture, we must be grateful for the Oedipus complex through which we escape bestiality. But there is no basis for supposing that humans are born anything but humans (and if there is Mitchell does not let us know about it). Certainly children have to be socialized into their specific culture; certainly man makes himself in history. But there is a world of difference between supposing that human babies are just like ape babies and must undergo fundamental transformation in order to be worthy of culture and supposing that human babies already have the basic capacities for full human development. The former position is well known: it is the essence of conservatism, justifying any horror against children in the name of "culture." Mitchell uses the certainty of the nature-culture dyad to justify the universality and necessity of the Oedipus complex, hence of patriarchal society. Her problematic is that of the "entry" into the human order, which is allegedly "human," rather than the transformation of the given social system into one that is more "human."

A critical psychological theory must instead determine the structue of interactions through which the child takes on the attributes of his/her sex and class. None of

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these structures can be taken as universal or eternal. In fact the whole point of Marxist theory is to expose the alleged "naturalness" of capitalist formations. Now Freud was able to grasp the exact structures through which people in his time and place were socialized. Processes of identification and object choice served to transform the libido at an unconscious level and to crystallize it into adult structures (id, ego, super-ego) with an arsenal of defenses (repression, projection, etc.) with which to maintain itself. Furthermore, Freud analyzed the language of the unconscious (condensation, displacement) which enabled him to help people deal with their self-destructive fixations. Finally, Freud demonstrated how the major psychic structures of his contemporaries were formed in processes of development. His characterization of the ego as in basic conflict with the id, his estimate of the degree of unconsciousness in experience—all these fundamental features of the psyche were viewed as a result of childhood experiences. Instead of dissecting the social nature of these experiences and totalizing this analysis, Freud hypostatized and mythologized them.

Recently, many theorists have tried to reexamine Freud's work in the light of critical theory. Schneider's *Neuröse und Klassenkampf* summarizes developments in Germany. J.F. Lyotard has reexamined the nature of the unconscious, seeking to refute Lacan's view of it on the analogy of language. Above all, Deleuze and Guattari, in *Capitalisme et schizophrénie: L'Anti-Oedipe* have brilliantly reduced the pretentions of the concept of the Oedipus complex while preserving its critical potentials. Rather than contribute to this debate, Mitchell totally ignores it.

For Mitchell, Freud's strength lay precisely where his feminist critics have mistakenly attacked him. Freud argued for the autonomy of psychology from biology: he rejected the notion that anatomy determines feminity (p. 17). Mitchell meticulously traces the development of feminine psychic structure through the castration complex and the Oedipus complex. Her argument here is well made: in Freud female traits such as intuitiveness, weak super-ego, relative inability for sublimation and deferred gratification are all rooted in psychic transformations undergone by the little girl. But how does one explain these "laws" of female development?

Freud argued that these traits are universal (at least within "civilization") and he did so by invoking his myth, in *Totem and Taboo*, of primal parricide. After killing the tyrannical father, the brothers internalized their guilt feelings, establishing the super-ego, law, morality, religion and patriarchy—all the lovely amenities of "civilization." Mitchell finds support and reinforcement for this Oedipal myth in Levi-Strauss' concept of incest. The incest taboo prevents the immediate family from closing into itself and forces the establishment of inter-familial relations (society) by the exchange of women. One cannot sleep with one's parent of the opposite sex, even though the temptation is there. This "law" sets in motion the psychic trajectory that Freud analysed. It establishes the (dead) father and his penis as the prime love objects for the daughter and it determines that the *only way* she can work out of this dilemma is to transform herself into a woman, like her mother, with all the traits of femininity, and establish her own family, gaining her own penis (her husband's), thereby reproducing the social cycle. All of this occurs, of course, on an unconscious level.

It is not difficult to recognize the absurdity of this argument about the origins of patriarchy, but is is most important that we see the function the myth performs for Freudian theory. It takes Freud's carefully developed analysis of the people he met in

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therapeutic situations and it substantializes his findings. It gives intellectual legitimacy to his discoveries—or it tries to. What do we have here if not ideology?

Mitchell argues against the feminist critique of Freud's myth of penis envy by showing that the feminists want to reduce Freudian insights to the level of the "real." (p. 347) while Freud is arguing at the level of the psychic or the "imaginary." Mitchell brings up the old argument by Freud that he became convinced that his female patients' fathers did not *really* rape them; the women only *imagined* it. This is enough for Mitchell (and for Freud) to cut off any hypothesis that girls develop their femininity within the relations of the nuclear family. Social relations do not shape the Oedipal conflict; it is on the level of the imaginary. In addition to the dualism of nature/culture, Mitchell takes over from Freud, totally uncritically, the dualism of real/imaginary. Thus her problematic is the misguided search for the imaginary universal that establishes the human order as necessarily one of patriarchy and subservient femininity. The point here is not that there is no difference between an actual rape and an imagined one, but the imagined one comes out of a psycho-social structure that must be made intelligible. The decisive level for Mitchell-Freud is clearly an autonomous imaginary one, whereas they should be seeking a point where the psychic and the social interpenetrate.

Hence, Mitchell interprets the Oedipus complex as the unconscious, imaginary structure through which little boys and girls enter into the social order. Each child goes through a set of imaginary experiences which transform raw libido into "normal" adult structures (e.g., the super-ego) and "normal" adult desires or love objects. Concretely, the travail of civilization works like this. The little girl, a bundle of pure drives or desires, discovers herself as castrated, as lacking a penis. She desires the father's penis and must repress that desire, transforming it into an imaginary rape by the father. The desire for the penis is then internalized through her identification with her mother. The girl may now, after latency, have her desire reemerge and be able to pursue its satisfaction by behaving "like a lady," passively seducing a male who is outside her nuclear family. Thus for Mitchell, it is wrong to attack Freud for biologism since femininity is precisely a result of a process that separates humans from the biological animal order.

We cannot doubt that middle-class women have had and probably continue to have those psychic patterns that Freud uncovered. We cannot doubt that men have dominated society, even matrilinear society. We cannot doubt that children in nuclear families undergo something like an Oedipus complex. But we can certainly deny the necessity of the process, the universality of feminine character and the theoretical method of explanation that Freud used. If feminine passivity is rooted in the imaginary experience of being seduced by the father and has the result of energizing a need for being seduced later by another man, it is hard to see how this would operate in societies where parents decided marital questions. It is not all hard to see how the "imaginary" level related to the "real" level in bourgeois circumstances where the consciously stated task for girls is to learn how to find a proper husband. Also, the fact that nuclear families are *private* worlds has much to do with the intensity of "imaginary" interactions between parents and children. Whether or not a father rapes his daughter, her fantasy of it *is part of their interaction*. Similarly the fact of having a penis or not is not separate from its social meaning. The meaning of the penis at the unconscious level or the conscious level cannot be determined arbitrarily, especially since the specific meanings given to it in

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Freud's account fit so well with the repressed nature of sexuality in bourgeois culture.

The fact that sexuality is not vehemently repressed in other cultures, as Reich points out, changes the significance of the penis even at the unconscious level. In the short space of the last fifty years we have witnessed a relative revaluation of sexuality and concurrently a relative disappearance of hysterical symptoms. The new "diseases", schizophrenia, identity crises, etc., imply new imaginary structures, new patterns within the nuclear family, and new patterns in the economy. The demise of the family as an economic unit, the proletarianization of the petty-bourgeoisie into white-collar workers, the entry of bourgeois women into the workplace, the almost complete isolation of the family in suburbia, the disintegration of the individualist work ethic, the transformation of father as patriarch into father as pal, the entry of TV into the home, the lowering of the birth rate, the absence of servants in bourgeois homes, the invention of contraceptives, etc., etc.—all of these profound changes in our social relations and social meanings have gone along with changes in psychic patterns. Yet Mitchell could deny all of this claiming that I am arguing at the level of the conscious. But her argument relies on a simple assertion, unsubstantiated except for the nonsense in *Totem and Taboo*, that the Oedipus complex and femininity have nothing to do with the nuclear family. It is like arguing against an economist's "law of supply and demand" or a political scientist's law of the balance of power.

Freud himself recognized historical changes: he considered Victorian sexual repression to be a high point in all "civilization," and guilt to be increasing along with the severity of the super-ego. At one point he said that the primitives have no super-ego. This is crucial because the super-ego is the residue of the Oedipus complex. If "primitives" have no super-ego they have no Oedipus complex; they have a different imaginary than us. This is what we would expect because one of the hallmarks of capitalism is an internalized morality. Freud explains this perfectly with the concept of the super-ego, but this is intelligible not in relation to some change from nature to culture but in relation to the emergency of the nuclear family and the market economy.

If we look at the concrete emotional social patterns of middle class families in the early 20th century we find that the specific attributes of the Oedipus complex were specific to that situation. For example, the intensity of feeling connected with the penis. Parents really told their sons that they would cut it off. Children were not permitted to play with their genitals. Freud's description of the Id as a "seething cauldron" also describes the emotionality of families where sex per se was totally repressed and where parents were absolute masters of children who were subject to the absolute moral imperative of "makng it" as a bourgeois. Femininity and masculinity were not simply sex designations; they were class designations. A working class female was certainly not feminine. Moreover, if one studies carefully Freud's descriptions of the Oedipal conflict, it is plain that he is speaking of relations that are both imaginary and real, unconscious and conscious. He refers explicity to the necessity for an external, punishing authority, a real father, who actually threatens castration, as a prerequisite for the Oedipus complex. Hence there are no grounds, except ideological ones, to universalize the Oedipus complex; no grounds to assume that children are animals, except by parents who have an unconscious and social need to see their children as such.

A futher mark of Mitchell's uncritical reading of Freud comes in her treatments of

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him as a scientist. Mitchell wants us to consider psychoanalysis as a science. Yet it was Freud's wish to have psychoanalysis accepted as a science that led him to isolate his findings from the social totality and to hypostatize the Oedipus complex. Since for Freud psychoanalysis was the only scientific study of man, he was led into reductionism. The only meaning of social structures to him was their psychoanalytic one. Society was nothing more than an eternal struggle between Eros and Thanatos. Freud was not really a defender of capitalism against communism, as is sometimes charged, because this was only a case of the narcissism of minor differences. If private property were abolished, something else would emerge to take its place as a field for object-cathexis. Hence the sole meaning of social interactions is their libidinal meaning. Since psychoanalysis is a science, it isolates itself from other fields and becomes a psychologism. And since Mitchell does not criticize Freudian science, her own position veers toward reductionism. In the end, for her, the movement against patriarchy is nothing more than a psychological movement. Her dualism of imaginary real comes back to haunt her, blocking her attempt to theorize social change. Feminism becomes a struggle within the imaginary alone.

After 300 pages on Freud, Reich and Laing, Mitchell takes only 50 pages to dismiss the feminists--de Beauvoir, Friedan, Figes, Greer, Firestone and Millet. Here she defends Freud against biologism and shows that there can be no feminist utopia built upon the existing traits of femininity.

Mitchell concludes with a discussion of patriarchy in which she confronts the basic questions of the women's movement. All of a sudden she introduces the problematic of overcoming patriarchy, not in the form of *male* dominance but as *father* dominance since it is the father's penis (the symbolic one) that is the source of the feminine unconscious. Given the framework of nature/culture, it is hard to see how animals can enter the human order in any way but through patriarchy. She copies Lévi-Strauss: "The legally controlled exchange of women is the primary factor that distinguishes mankind from all other primates, from a cultural standpoint....the systematic exchange of women is definitional of human society." (p. 372) "Human society" and patriarchy appear as eternal coordinates. Again, her uncritical reliance on Freud compels her to seek the universals rather than the historical dialectic. Mitchell tries to overcome this problem by shifting registers: the goal of the women's movement is to overcome patriarchal culture and ideology, while a separate worker's movement will overcome capitalism. Women are to carry out a "cultural revolution," while men change the social structures. This new division of labor is the old story of women as protectors of morality.

For Mitchell, patriarchy is the key to ideological dominance at all levels, since it sets the pattern of our unconscious. It is true that Marx does not explain the force of ideology very well and that Freud does show how regression and inertia in history are tied to the super-ego which reproduces old emotional needs. In fact, I would argue that the importance of Freud lies here. He allows us to see why workers do not recognize what Marx thought was their rational self-interest in abolishing capitalism since they are emotionally and unconsciously rooted in needs for dependence, for authority and for obeying the laws. The ideological roots of oppression are anchored in the structures of the unconscious and the libido which are formed during childhood in patriarchal, nuclear families. But Mitchell does not follow this path. Instead she directs the feminist movement against a vague notion of culture. She does not focus the critique on specific sets of interactions.

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There is one element of an historical base for feminism that Mitchell does spell out. Patriarchy began in societies dominated by kinship and the Oedipus complex. Today, however, kinship structures have been replaced by nuclear families (although she does not explain this change). Now the prohibitions and restrictions deriving from kinship continue to dominate our imaginary lives as powerful but unnecessary residues. "It is not that civilization has passed beyond the point where it needs its discontents but that there is a *contradiction* between the mode of the immediate expression-repression of these desires and the laws which forbid them as the very basis of culture. The ban on incest and the demand for exogamy howl so loudly in the contemporary Oedipus complex because they are reinforced precisely when they are no longer needed." (p. 410) There is thus a contradiction at the heart of the nuclear family since it is made to bear ancient restrictions *which did not arise in its context*. We are asked to believe that the nuclear family is riddled with an incest taboo that has nothing to do with it. Notice this incredible displacement of the contradiction: we must struggle against *kinship structures*. Mitchell can find no reason why the nuclear family should generate Oedipal feelings. She sees no inherent repression in the fact that adults can have only one significant emotional-sexual relationship; that children must be brought up and dominated by only two people; that children have no choice of people to identify with but must have all their emotional needs gratified by two peole (one of each sex) who are themselves deeply rooted in sexism; that the entire context of the patriarchal, nuclear family is limited by and geared to the needs of advanced capitalism; that the whole gamut of our most significant personal relationships is restricted by a repressive moral code; that we are not free to experiment and to establish our own forms of interaction (Marx's definition of communism) on a personal level, in short that our entire sexual/unconscious lives are geared to the iron laws of isolated families because we are not permitted to create our own communities. Instead of relating the "contradiction" of the patriarchal, nuclear family to its actual structures ("imaginary, symbolic and real"), Mitchell tells us that the source of our discontents comes from residual, unconscious structures, based on a much earlier form of social organization which persists unnecessarily in our own time. Instead of a dialectical social analysis we get grand, sweeping universals: "The restoration or abolition of the family is not in itself important except as a symptom of this redundancy [of the prohibition of incest and the Oedipus complex]. It is the stress both in reactionary and revolutionary arguments...on the family and on its own contradictory nature under capitalism that has obscured the more fundamental contradiction between the specific conditions of the family and the demands of the law of human culture" (p. 411).

Mark Poster

Sheila Rowbotham, *Women's Consciousness, Man's World*. Baltimore: Penguin, 1973. 136 pp. $1.95.

Women's Consciousness, Man's World is the third of Sheila Rowbotham's three recent books to reach the United States. In *Women, Resistance and Revolution*

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Rowbotham ranged over the history of pre-industrial and industrial Europe, the Russian, the Chinese and the more contemporary third world revolutions in Cuba, Algeria and Vietnam. She sought to recover the origins, development and fates of feminist ideas and movements, and most particularly their interaction with socialist movements, in opposition and in power. In *Hidden From History* she gives more detailed consideration to the history of feminism and socialism in England. With *Women's Consciousness, Man's World* Rowbotham departs from social history but not from her focus on the mutual coming to terms or inability to come to terms of socialism and feminism in both theory and practice. In this short book Rowbotham analyzes the changing situation of women in contemporary capitalist society and tries to develop a Marxian feminist theory which explains these changes and can offer guidance to the struggle for woman's liberation. Rowbotham will neither repudiate Marxism or give way to demands for a doctrinal orthodoxy which derides the concerns of the new feminism as self-indulgent middle-class psychologising. Hers is a Marxist feminism which preserves and makes use of the insights of the new feminism of the 1960s.

Rowbotham's central thesis is that the source and specific character of woman's subjugation in post-World War II industrial society lies in the clash between traditional role in the no longer traditional family and her expanding role as a life long wage worker. The pared-down unstable nuclear family of the mass consumption phase of capitalism can no longer be expected to shelter or debar the majority of working class women from virtually continuous participation in the paid labor force. Working women increasingly find themselves facing permanent super-exploited work in all manner of new and old women's work categories—in service, socializing, nurturing and helping jobs of all kinds, in blue collars and in white collars. Of course, women carrying the double burden of household and job is nothing new. What is new is the massive permanent employment of women on such a scale that the cultural stereotype of part-time or temporary work to tide the family over and of the exceptional status of the woman continuously employed is crumbling.

The ideology of a woman's place is increasingly incapable of giving calming and curbing self-definition to women who know that typically this will not and cannot be their lot. At the same time the home which used to be women's place is becoming a golden age fable as the nuclear family staggers under the blows that contemporary capitalism has dealt it. Women are learning that they can't go home again. The ideas and images of femininity our culture projects and the life expectations for which women have been socialized no longer fit the patterns of their lives and they know it. Of this brew of conflict and discontent Rowbotham writes, "The contradiction which appears clearly in capitalism between family and industry, private and public, personal and impersonal, is the fissure in women's consciousness through which revolt erupts" (p. xv). The conflict which increasing numbers of women are experiencing between home and paid labor, Rowbotham believes, compels them to struggle against their subjugation in both domains at once if they are to combat either effectively. She sees a potentially vanguard role for women workers, catalyzing a revitalized working class movement and bringing feminist content to socialist demands, if common cause can be made with male workers. Rowbotham takes the position that socialist and feminist revolution require each other in the sense that the best and fullest realization of both now possible are mutually dependent.

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Rowbotham believes that traditional Marxism failed to provide a theoretically adequate analysis of the role of women and the family within capitalism or how the liberation of women is to be accomplished. But she believes Marxist theory can be extended so that it comprehends women's liberation. It is such a theoretical advance, a creative revision which makes of Marxism a vital and sustaining tradition and not a rigid orthodoxy which in her modest but determined way she claims to sketch. Her confidence comes from her work in the history of socialist and feminist movements. Those who in sanguine condescension claim that Marxism needs no critical revision cannot themselves be taken seriously, except as a threat to the socialist movement, by a woman who has herself documented the failure of socialists to absorb feminist ideas or to adequately represent and fight for the interests of women workers. Her study of social history leaves her equally unwilling to sever the feminist movement from the working class movement, for she finds isolated feminist movements to be helpless to solve the problems they address.

Rowbotham's book is important for many reasons. Not the least of which is its appearance at a time when the feminist movements of the late sixties have receded—in the United States at least. Many of the people who were part of that movement, and of the New Left in all its guises, find themselves poised now, self-doubting and uncertain, trying to evaluate the social and personal significance of their years in the movement, trying to account for the failure of the women's movement to transform itself into a mass movement, and for many a class movement, to find resonance with the concerns of working women in their millions, to help them to articulate an angry understanding of their exploitation and oppression, to spark mass struggle. Rowbotham produces a cogent analysis of the social origins and significance of the new feminism itself. She helps answer our need for self-understanding and in a manner which reaffirms the valuable contributions of the new feminism, reasserts the commonality of all women's experience while tracing the connections between new feminist consciousness and agitation and the changing nature of women's work in advanced capitalist society.

Rowbotham locates the birth of the new feminism in the same conflict between women's work in the family and in the paid labor force, between the old ideology and the new unfamiliar, unsanctioned and as yet unmystified roles. What is especially helpful in Rowbotham's account of the new feminists is that she permits us to see the so-called "middle class" university-based movement as issuing from and combatting the very same problems that beset all post-war women rather than as a precious and self-indulgent subculture. Of the women's movement in the 60s, Rowbotham writes: "Women's liberation developed first at the most highly developed point of capitalist society, the production of a new kind of intellectual skilled worker in mass higher and further education. The apparently sexless character of the student work is illusory. The clash between home values and university or college is extreme for all students from families where higher education is unfamiliar. This is especially true for female students. Girls who go to university encounter capitalism in one of its most sophisticated forms, but their socialization in the family has prepared them for marriage and motherhood, traditional production at home. Temporarily co-workers with boys in the knowledge industry, the contrast between their traditional feminine role and competitive academic life is extreme. The gap between liberal educational promise and future occupational reality is even wider too for them than the boys. It was not that the post-war generation was the first to experience this, but they were

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the first women to reach higher education in large numbers, who did not belong to a privileged elite" (pp. 90-91). These educated women are being channelled into the new public institutions which perform the transmuted work of the family while their sisters are released for the blue collar public analogues of women's occupations.

The women's movement of the sixties gave voice to the painful clash between the old values, expectations and work-styles of family life and the public world of work which patriarchal ideology tells us is not our proper place but where capitalism compels us to labor which post-war women are experiencing. The concern of the new feminism with the personal and the psychological reveals the tension between the two spheres of women's activity and between the old ideology and the unchanging nature of women's work. The insight which the new feminism contributes to the self-understanding and struggle of all women is that the oppression of women must be fought on both the family and the public fronts if female and human liberation is to be won.

Rowbotham's book strikes an American sensibility as quite extraordinarily optimistic at this time. She sees enormous potential for the emergence of a mass feminist socialist movement as an integral part of a resurgent working class movement. While she nowhere speaks in terms of its inevitable emergence much less its inevitable success, her theoretical work is an attempt to ground its possibility in the dynamics of contemporary capitalism and to provide adequate theoretical guidelines to the strategic shape of women's struggles. While I long to share her optimism and would not claim that it is unwarranted, I do not believe that her theoretical work provides an adequate groundwork for the struggle against women's subjugation.

Feminist political theory is not the only topic Rowbotham treats. There are insightful discussions of the family, sexuality, and contemporary politics in this intelligent and well written book. Her autobiographical account of the development of her own feminist consciousness within the English counter-cultural and left-political ambiences of the sixties provides a particularly interesting comparison for American readers. Her principal concern however is with the political economy of women's liberation and it is her theoretical work in this area I will take up in what follows.

Rowbotham is seeking a middle ground between the traditional marxist analysis of women's condition and unmarxian analyses of the new feminists. Like all those who seek compromise between two positions regarded by the adherents as mutually exclusive, I have no doubt she will be met with hasty dismissal by many in both camps. Her work deserves serious attention because it takes the project of marxian feminism from the exhortatory to the working stage. With it we can begin to determine whether Marxist feminism holds the hope of genuine theoretical advance or merely distorts and obfuscates the situation of women. What is unique about Rowbotham's position is best understood by comparing it with the two sorts of positions she is trying to find a middle way between. I'll begin by sketching what I'll call Traditional Marxism and New Feminism and then take up Rowbotham's work.

The view I'll call Traditional Marxism is by no means to be associated with total neglect of women's issues or even with lack of concern with restructuring personal and sexual relations between men and women within as well as without the family. What distinguishes the Traditional Marxist is not his or her interest in women's liberation or commitment to fight for it but the kind of analysis put forward of the

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causes of women's exploitation and oppression under capitalism, and the measures to be employed by socialist men and women in the struggle for women's liberation. There simply is no other developed analysis within the Marxist tradition. This view is therefore fairly attributable to all classical Marxist theorists and organizations, however widely they may differ and have differed historically in the importance they attach to women's liberation or in other areas of theory and strategy.

According to the Traditional Marxian view, the many-faceted oppression of women in capitalist society and the super-exploitation of women workers at the point of production can, must be wholly understood as either part of or a consequence of the exploitation of wage labor in commodity production. The role of women within the family and their work activity in the household is to reproduce the workforce, to reproduce and socialize a new generation of workers from whom surplus value will be extracted at the work place. So Engels. So Margaret Benston in her early (1969) influential Marxist analysis of women's work. So Kathy Ennis in a review of Rowbotham's book for *International Socialism* (no. 68, April 1964), the theoretical organ of *British International Socialists*, the largest of the Left groups in England, and no doubt one of the principal theoretical adversaries she is concerned to answer. Ennis writes: "While the family provides capitalism with labour power, capitalism pays the worker a wage not only for himself but also to sustain his wife and children. The value of labour power is the sum of the means of subsistence necessary for the maintenance of the labourer and the production of fresh labour power (i.e., the workers' children)" (p. 16).

According to the traditional marxists, to free women from their imprisonment within the family, no more is necessary than to replace capitalist commodity production with socialism. It is capitalism which has refashioned the family and women's activity within it into a suitable means of cheaply reproducing the workforce. The ancient division of labor between men and women assigning women to household work and child rearing together with the traditionally low status of women and women's tasks in pre-capitalist society made it possible for capitalism to retain women in the family as low-caste reproduction specialists. The traditional low status of women and women's work was reinterpreted and reinforced within capitalism by being outside the cash nexus of wage labor. Universally perceived as low caste by members of all classes, unskilled and burdened with the demands of their family roles, women also became a super-exploitable reserve army of labor.

The conditions necessary for the active participation of women in the working-class movement and for the working class to begin to address the problem of women's liberation are met when women begin to identify themselves with the proletarian struggle, to see themselves in increasing numbers primarily as lifelong wage workers whose immediate and long term interests are the same as those of male workers. The working class movement at once encourages and accomplishes the growth of solidarity and unity between male and female workers by fighting for full equality for women, especially at work. The demands for equal pay and equal access to all occupational categories are crucial. The liberation of women will be fully accomplished after the overthrow of capitalism by socializing the erstwhile private household domain. Those who perform these necessary tasks will gain in stature and these tasks will cease eventually to be predominantly women's work. The sexual division of labor will be superceded as without basis or function within socialist society. Thus the fight against the exploitation of wage labor and for socialism is

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sufficient to achieve and necessarily encompasses women's liberation. Since there are no antagonisms between men and women except those that capitalism creates or preserves in some suitably altered form, there is no need for a separate organization of women workers outside the revolutionary party which is based on, and leads the whole working class. Such separatism can only defeat the very class solidarity of working men and women which is essential for the success of all aspects of the socialist program, including women's liberation. This last point is of course the strategic punch-line of the Traditional Marxian analysis.

The New Feminists have of course widely differing views on the nature and causes of women's oppression and about how it is to be fought. Reformist feminists deny that socialism is necessary to achieve full sexual equality, a view which Marxists sometimes embrace when arguing against an independent women's movement. What all the views I'm calling New Feminist have in common is that they deny the theoretical and political organizational reductionism of the Theoretical Marxists. Feminists deny that socialism more or less automatically secures womens' liberation provided women workers are integrated into the revolutionary party and into the public sphere of production. Revolutionary feminists adduce patriarchal institutions through which men dominate and exploit women as neither reducable to nor explainable by the broadly economic categories of Marxian historical materialism. Feminists appeal instead to independent psychological, cultural or physiological explanations of systematic male domination. While feminist theory is at least as yet underdeveloped and diverse, all New Feminists would agree that independent political action by women directed at overthrowing patriarchal institutions and its male supporters and beneficiaries is essential, although as yet no clear strategic perspective has emerged.

Rowbotham finds both New Feminist and the Traditional Marxist theories inadequate. The historical experience of socialist movements leaves little room for untroubled adherence to the traditional analysis. Yet there is more to the reluctance of Marxists to give it up than dogmatism or insensitivity to women's oppression. Rowbotham is attuned to these misgivings. Let me mention three which seem to me most important. One, there is the fear that feminist analysis and strategy will lead to a debilitating split in the working class movement costly to both socialism and feminism. These qualms of course should not lead feminists or Marxists unconvinced by the traditional analysis to capitulate their efforts to better understand the basis of women's oppression. Second, Marxists are concerned about a retreat from a social analysis which yields a political direction aimed at realizing historically possible progressive change to a purely moral and utopian theory unable to give effective guidance to political action. Third, Marxism offers a unitary explanation of the causes of human progress and misery. The explanation rests on a broadly economic reading of human history. If the oppression of women in capitalist society cannot be explained as an aspect of the class struggle between capital and workers, with the aid of however subtle an analysis of if not merely ephiphenomenal, then ultimately derivative ideological and cultural factors, the claim to provide a unitary analysis is defeated. This has a potentially far greater impact on Marxian theory and politics than the ceding of the claim that proletarian revolution is *the* condition for the full and free development of the human race. More is at stake than the recognition of an independent political movement to fight for women's liberation. If human history cannot be wholly understood in terms of the dynamic development of class struggle,

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than a whole array of questions emerge as to how many independent causal factors there are, how they interact, which among them are primary, and what, if any, human problems proletarian revolution might solve. With these questions unanswered the unique connection between social analysis and effective political action for human liberation which Marxism claims for itself is dissolved.

Rowbotham is I think responding to these concerns with her theory of the nature of women's oppression in capitalist society. She locates the root causes of woman's oppression in the economic structure. This allows her to discern in the expectable evolution of the economic system a direction which will make serious revolutionary political address to that problem an integral part of a socialist movement.

The focal point of Rowbotham's theoretical work is her sharpened redefinition of the concept of patriarchy. Instead of vague talk about pervasive institutional male domination Rowbotham attempts to find a clear and a materialist account of patriarchy which can be integrated into and enrich the Marxist account of human society in general and capitalism in particular. To understand what she is doing and the problems which I think balk this attempt at theoretically adequate Marxian feminism it is necessary to look again at Engels, whose *Origin of the Family Private Property and the State* is the *locus classicus* of the traditional interpretation.

Engels maintains that the first class antagonism in human history was between men and women. It arose in the following way. He begins by assuming an unexplained original division of labor between men and women which assigned men to productive work and women to the equally important but distinct sphere of domestic labor. When in the course of the development of husbandry, human effort became capable of producing some surplus beyond the minimal required for immediate consumption, this surplus was associated with male activity in the production sphere. Engels claims it was increased success with domesticated animals which was the critical advance. This development increased the importance and prestige of male as over against female work and put men in position to contest successfully for consolidation of their advantageous position. Patriarchy was the institutional form which the original victory of men over women took. The crucial patriarchal innovation was the introduction of inheritance of property in the male line of descent. This permitted consolidation of accumulated wealth through the transmission of a man's herds and lands to the heirs of his body rather than its reversion to the stock of common propety of his wife's gens, in accordance with the matrilineal inheritance which Engels believed preceded the subjugation of women. This introduction of patrilineal inheritance required the imposition of monogamy on women in order to permit secure ascription of paternity. For Engels the key to patriarchal control of women is the male need for certain paternity in order to develop a system of private property in the increasingly productive agricultural sources of wealth. Male domination of women was expressed and legitimated in the male private property system as ownership of women as private property. Women, always domestic workers, became the domestic servants of their husbands. This secured their subjugation and their inability to fight against it for millenia. Engels formulated the Traditional Marxist solution to the woman question. The liberation of women requires her entrance into the sphere of public productive labor and the socialization of the private sphere of domestic labor.

Rowbotham believes a different account of patriarchy is required to understand the origin and development of male domination over women. She defines patriarchy

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as the control of men over both women's labor power and reproductive capacity. On first consideration, there is considerable plausibility in Rowbotham's redefinition of patriarchy. Engels' assumption that women did not engage in productive labor in traditional societies is challengeable in at least two respects. One, he certainly exaggerates the extent of the traditional division of labor. Women have always labored in the public as well as the domestic sphere. Two, there is the question of whether household work itself should be considered productive labor. The question of what is and what is not productive labor has proved a troublesome one for Marxists and the analysis of women's household and childrearing work is but one vitally important aspect of the general problem. Engels founded the traditional line that women's domestic activities are within the sphere of consumption, not production, are not value-creating and therefore not productive labor. While not claiming to provide a fully revised theory as to the nature of productive labor or even a full analysis of the nature of women's domestic labor Rowbotham insists that women's domestic labor is productive labor. In this connection Rowbotham refuses to either apply or withhold the term "exploitation" in its technical sense to women's household labor. She says: "...the theory of surplus value, while relating clearly to the dominant capitalist mode of production, is difficult to apply to production within the family which is governed by quite different conditions and circumstances. Rather than straining Marx's categories of exploitation and surplus value, worked out to explain commodity production, into the family mode of production and quibbling about the use of exploitation and oppression in this context, we have to analyze women's labor in the home on its own terms and develop new concepts" (p. 69). The claim that household work is productive labor is the key to her analysis of the situation of women in general and under capitalism. Although she shies away from describing men and women as two classes, she defines patriarchy as a distinct *mode of production* which "coexists with the dominant mode (commodity production) in a completely subordinate and dependent relation" (p. 65). This analysis permits her to maintain both that there is an antagonistic relationship between men and women, based on male exploitation of female domestic labor but that patriarchy is an integral aspect of capitalism. By locating male domination of women in the exploitation of women's labor power by men, Robotham can provide the kind of materialist analysis of women's condition that makes it integratable with a Marxian account of society and revolution. She need not appeal to any extra-economic explanatory factors. If patriarchal production is as she claims a subsystem of capitalism it is plausible to expect a united struggle by working men and women to destroy capitalism and its patriarchic subsystem at once. This sets the stage for the strategic punch-line of her analysis. She sees an independent socialist feminist working women's organization as one arm of a united working class movement. Her analysis of the trajectory of the development of patriarchal and commodity producing labor of women workers within advanced capitalism shows how conditions may be maturing for such a united struggle which does not submerge the interests of women or deny adequate political expression to women's liberation.

Both Traditional Marxists and Feminists can mount strong objections to Rowbotham's analysis of patriarchy as a mode of production integrated into the capitalist system and adapted to its uses. The root trouble for Rowbotham lies with the lack of an adequate account of housework as productive labor. If housework is indeed a mode of production, then in classical Marxist terms men and women face

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each other as two antagonistic classes, men dominating women politically and extracting a surplus from women's labor. Where is the basis for united working class struggle if working class women have a class enemy at home? Rowbotham's answer is that men and women workers have a common enemy in the capitalist system which will only fall before their joint efforts and that men have an interest in joining the struggle against patriarchy for the sake of their own liberation as well as for the sake of the class unity which is needed to defeat capital. The Traditional Marxist can I think make telling objections against the theoretical grounds for alliance with independence Rowbotham envisages.

We may recall that for Marx proletarian revolution liberates the working class from capitalist exploitation and by so doing liberates all of mankind from a system which inhibits further human development. Both proletarian and bourgeois are alienated beings under capitalism. The bourgeois as well as the proletarian is not realizing the possibilities for human development which material conditions permit. Yet the bourgeois is expected to fight to defend his bourgeois privileges. Although it is hardly perlucidly clear in classical Marxism why the bourgeois is locked into bourgeois consciousness, cannot adopt or perhaps even understand the progressive all-humanity serving proletarian standpoint, it is clear that Marx believed the bourgeoisie had to fight to maintain the capitalist order as surely as the working class was forced to fight against it. Rowbotham must face an analogous question. Why won't working men, beneficiaries of patriarchy, resist its abolition? She argues that men need women allies to defeat capitalism. She does not rely on the argument that men have and will see that they have a new world to gain by defeating patriarchy. To make this case, Rowbotham would have to make two arguments convincingly. One, that men workers have no viable strategic alternative to alliance with women workers. Surely the history of the labor movements tends to support the reasonableness of this position. She would also have to show that men will not cleave to patriarchy privilege if it means debilitating the anticapitalist struggle. This latter is the troublesome item. She needs to show that the struggle against women's exploitation forces women to fight patriarchy and that the development of patriarchy itself increases its vulnerability while increasingly forcing women to fight it and in such a way as to merge with and enhance the struggle against capitalism. Without such an argument, her Marxian feminism becomes a merely moral feminism of the utopian alternative rather than a guide to the realization of a material historical possibility through struggle. Marx claims to have shown that capitalism through the workings of its own development will become increasingly vulnerable to socialist transformation by the working class. Rowbotham needs to show that similarly, the pressures on women are being generated by patriarchy and public production and their role in both in such a way as to encourage a revolutionary transformation of the family and the role of women within public production. This is where the analysis of women's labor in the home becomes crucial. Without an analogous analysis of the dynamic development of the contradictory tendencies of patriarchal development, feminism is but moral exhortation. If the secret of commodity production is the exploitation of wage labor and the systemic tendency of the rate of profit to fall, what is the secret of household production and the effects of its systematic development?

In the absence of such an analysis, it is equally as plausible to expect the development of capitalism in the direction of the abolition of the family role for

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women altogether in favor or the two sexes as indifferently workers in the public sphere of wage labor and consumers of its products and services as to expect socialist feminist revolt. Unless the dynamics of patriarchy are revealed neither the full dimensions of the problem not the best mode of combatting it are within our grasp.

From a New Feminist point of view another sort of objection can be raised. Rowbotham claims that the household mode of production is analogous to the feudal mode of production. Men and women like Lord and vassal exchange protection for services (p. 64). Unless the precise nature of this exchange can be delineated and be shown to crucially involve a net extraction of economic value from women by men, Rowbotham's analysis of the household as a feudal-like, economically rooted dominance arrangement will remain justifiably unconvincing to New Feminists. The household division of labor in the absence of such an analysis is as plausibly susceptible to explanation in terms of irreducibly noneconomic factors, such as an essential or culturally induced male psychology of domination. Again the question comes down to an adequate analysis of housework as productive labor. Marxism has been bedevilled by a tendency to define productive labor so narrowly that only industrial workers qualify for membership in the proletariat. This has not proved servicable in analyzing many features of contemporary capitalism with the vast growth in the number of people employed in both the capitalist sector and by the state in non-industrial occupations. The analysis of household work of women is surely an aspect of this general problem and probably cannot be solved in isolation from its overall solution. In the absence of its solution, Rowbotham's thesis that women's household labor is exploited productive labor remains programmatic. She herself certainly does not claim to offer more than a preliminary and exploratory theory of household production. Marxists can certainly not afford to reject this theory on the grounds of its lack of orthodoxy when the orthodox concept of productive labor has proved so unserviceable in analyzing the contemporary capitalist economy. Nevertheless, while Rowbotham's book succeeds in raising the question of the appropriate economic analysis of women's household work in sharp form, the answer remains to be given.

Elizabeth Rapaport

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To the Union of Czechoslovak Lawyers, Curie Square 7, Prague 1—Staré Mesto

On July 14, 1974, the Czech press published a protest resolution by the Union of Czechoslovak Lawyers concerning events in Chile. This document states that the Union of Lawyers follows with great apprehension the daily flow of news concerning illegal measures and escalating terror in the country; it further states that the Union condemns the persecution, torture, and mass executions of Chilean patriots. In its resolution, the Union calls for the restoration of constitutional and democratic freedoms and observes that representatives of the Chilean people are deprived of civil rights and legal protection. The Union demands that it be allowed to participate in the defense of Luis Corvalán during his trial, as well as of other patriots.

We believe that all progressive people the world over should do all they can for Chilean revolutionaries and democrats, offer material and moral support to their struggle for a democratic society and socialism. We can say so only now because many of us have had no earlier opportunity. We are in complete solidarity with the struggle of Chilean progressive forces, and we unequivocally and energetically condemn the terror of the fascist junta.

We have the right to express such solidarity, for we are linked with progressive Chileans through common ideals, common goals, and frequently through similar fates. However, we deny the right to express such solidarity to you, gentlemen from the Union of Czech Lawyers; for we are not aware of a single case in which your Union has come forth in defense of human rights, civil liberties, or adherence to legality in your own country. Do you really believe that it is correct, from the viewpoint of legality and its role in society, for thousands of our fellow citizens in recent years to have been forced out of their positions and into jobs where their training and qualification is useless? Do you believe that children of so-called "rotten" parents should not be allowed to study at high schools and colleges? Do you believe that it is correct for numerous fellow citizens to have been villified in the press for their recent political activity (i.e., during 1968-69), with no chance to defend themselves? Do you, gentlemen from the Union of Czech Lawyers, really believe that in your own country there is freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly and association, freedom of movement, including that of leaving your own country and returning, or freedom of scientific inquiry? Do you believe it is right, from the viewpoint of criminal law and its role in society, that in Czechoslovakia the death penalty may be meted out for conducting "especially dangerous activities against the foundations of the Republic. . . if it results in particularly detrimental consequences"—especially in light of recent experiences whereby any political activity frowned on by our ruling group can be described as inimical to the Republic? Is it really right that in the summer of 1972, 47 Communists and socialists were sentenced to long years (up to six and one half) in prison? Do you really believe that these trials were conducted in strict accordance with the law, that during investigation by the secret police no psychological pressure or physical torture was used? Are you satisfied that the stipulation concerning public participation was met? Are you sure that during the hundreds of political trials since 1969, foreign lawyers from democratic associations did not request participation and that, if they did, they were allowed to observe the trials? Are you satisfied that the conditions of incarcerated Communists and socialists meet the standards set by law (even though it was amended in 1973 giving jailers more discretion), that political prisoners are not treated worse than criminals, that they are being fed adequately, do not suffer from avitaminosis, enjoy full medical care, that their elementary educational needs are met and that, conversely, they are not isolated in order to be liquidated through mental breakdowns?

We all live in the same country, and we are all aware of the general state of affairs. If all citizens are responsible, your responsibility is greater because of your greater knowledge and your greater capacity to change or alleviate things. Apart from that, we believe, on the basis of numerous personal experiences, that you are hardly an organization representative of the bulk of Czech lawyers.

Your resolution in defense of civil rights in Chile and in opposition to the fascist junta is hypocritical. We, Czech political prisoners, are indeed linked in solidarity with Chilean socialists, Communists, revolutionary Marxists, Christians and other democrats, in line with our own diverse political orientations. You, however, have nothing in common with them and hypocritical resolutions can hardly mask that fact. Your task is to occlude the situation of our own country, which trades with the Chilean fascist junta, and has refused to offer political asylum to Chilean emigrés.

We have confidence in the future victory of our Chilean comrades, friends, and brothers against fascism and terror, for democracy, freedom, and socialism. They have many true allies in Czechoslovakia.

Signed by 30 political prisoners who have spent time in Czech prisons between 1969 and 1974

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